

# EVALUATION OF THE WELSH REGIONAL AGGREGATES WORKING PARTIES - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Regional Aggregate Working Parties (RAWPs) were established in England and Wales in the early 1970s to enable the provision of aggregates to be managed in such a way as to ensure an adequate security of supply for the construction industry, but also to address concerns regarding the impact of aggregates extraction on the environment.

Following devolution, the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) has followed an increasingly divergent path from England in its policies for minerals planning, especially with regard to the supply of aggregates. There has been particular emphasis on the use of alternative (secondary and recycled) materials and consideration has been given to a move away from historical supply patterns to the current notions of sustainability including the concept of the 'environmental capacity' of potential source areas to produce aggregates with minimal environmental impacts. As part of these changes, WAG enhanced the role of the RAWPs to provide additional assessments and monitoring reports relating to wider sustainability issues and to provide '5-yearly Regional Technical Statements.

In the light of these policy changes, WAG considered that it was an appropriate time to re-evaluate the role and purpose of the RAWPs in Wales. This report presents the findings of that evaluation. In summary, the key findings are as follows:

The **Managed Aggregates Supply System** is regarded by all stakeholders as both necessary and working well. The system provides an important degree of confidence to the minerals and construction industries in the long term security of supply. Without it, there would be less scope for strategic thinking, less opportunity to achieve sustainable supply patterns and much greater reliance on the appeals process, at much greater cost to everyone.

The **Role of the RAWPs** in monitoring and delivering the managed aggregate supply system is also seen by stakeholders as both important and necessary. Without the RAWPs it would be far more difficult for the WAG to manage the system, to interface with mineral operators, or to achieve the consensus needed between industry and MPAs for the system to work well. The current arrangement of two RAWPs in Wales is considered appropriate due to the very different supply and demand patterns within the two regions. The existing functions of the RAWPs are generally appropriate, but some fine tuning is required.

The **RAWPs Membership** is considered to be about right, and should remain technically focused, but one important omission is the 'end users' sector.

The **Regional Technical Statements** (RTS) now lie at the heart of the managed supply system in Wales and are seen by all consultees as a positive step forward. There is a need, however, for further refinement and for clarification of the status and ownership of the documents. The preparation of the statements has been both difficult and time consuming, not least because this is the first time the RTS concept has been implemented. Both industry and MPAs have noted that the clarity of presentation, the currency of the data and the procedures for dealing with consultation responses have all been compromised to varying degrees – perhaps because of the need to complete the documents within a tight timescale. They also consider that, when the documents are next revised, they need to be written more concisely and in a style that is more attractive and easier to follow.

The attempts to address **Environmental Capacity** (using the IMAECA method) and carbon reduction through the **Proximity Principle** are seen by most stakeholders as being potentially better, *in principle*, than the less prescriptive system in England. However, there are still doubts within industry, especially, as to the validity of the IMAECA approach and more specific concerns regarding the criteria used and the fact that the **apportionment** calculations for individual MPAs do not seem to have taken any account of Environmental Capacity or of differences in external demand between different MPAs (e.g. exports of High Specification Aggregate from South Wales and Limestone exports to NW England from North Wales).

A number of difficulties have been faced by RAWPs in the **collection of data**, particularly on secondary and recycled aggregates. Through their annual reports and RTS, the RAWPs have reported that much of the source data on these materials is of questionable reliability, not least because of differences in survey methods, differences in information sources, and low response rates due to the effects of survey fatigue. Additional data is needed on the transport of aggregates, in order to understand the complexities which already distort the 'proximity principle' (e.g. local distribution patterns via intermediate depots, asphalt plants and concrete batching facilities; and exports of High Specification Aggregates to many parts of England). Such data is also needed to provide a basis for measuring the effectiveness of any future changes in reducing carbon emissions. The data is complex, however, and time consuming to collate. There will always be a trade-off between the complexity of the information requested and the completeness of the resulting survey responses. The most complete data is that produced by the operators in connection with the 4-yearly AM surveys

With regard to the **Technical Secretaries**, there is a clear potential for these roles to be expanded further to provide MPAs with technical advice and proactive guidance, to encourage cooperative working between MPAs, and to coordinate feedback on the implementation and need for improvement of the RTS. The Technical Secretaries and RAWP Chairmen roles are, however, already very demanding on the host MPA and difficult to achieve on a part-time basis. The situation is compounded by the chronic shortage of experienced MPA officers to take on the role and the need for additional funding if the role is to be expanded further. As in any supply chain, there is a vital need for 'succession planning' to ensure that the system continues to be managed effectively in order to ensure a continued security of supply. A clear strategy and appropriate funding arrangements therefore need to be identified. Specific recommendations have been given to address these points and with regard to strengthening the capabilities of small unitary authorities to engage more effectively in the strategic planning process, through the creation of sub-regional groupings of MPAs.

In conclusion, this review has found that, in most respects, the RAWPs have fulfilled their obligations to the best of their abilities. In most cases this has been sufficient to enable the system to work well, but there is room for improvement in certain areas. Where the RAWPs' objectives have not been fully met, or have been met only with difficulties and/or delays, this has been due to a combination of external factors, ranging from a lack of reliable data in some areas to the pressures of undertaking increased workloads against tight timescales with limited resources. The various recommendations outlined in Chapter 7 of this report should help to address the specific difficulties which have hindered better performance.

Further information, including how to obtain a copy of the full report, can be obtained from:

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# GWERTHUSO GWEITHGORAU AGREGAU RHANBARTHOL CYMRU - CRYNODEB GWEITHREDOL

Sefydlwyd Gweithgorau Agregau Rhanbarthol (RAWPau) yng Nghymru a Lloegr ar ddechrau'r 1970au er mwyn galluogi rheoli darparu agregau mewn ffordd a fyddai'n sicrhau diogelwch cyflenwadau digonol ar gyfer y diwydiant adeiladu, ond hefyd i fynd i'r afael â'r pryderon o ran effaith cloddio agregau ar yr amgylchedd.

Ar ôl datganioli, mae Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru wedi dilyn llwybr gwahanol iawn i Loegr o ran ei pholisïau ar gyfer cynllunio mwynau, yn arbennig o ran cyflenwi agregau. Bu pwyslais penodol ar ddefnyddio deunyddiau amgen (eilaidd ac wedi'u hailgylchu) ac ystyriwyd symud o batrymau cyflenwi hanesyddol i'r syniadau presennol o gynaliadwyedd gan gynnwys y cysyniad o 'gapasiti amgylcheddol' ardaloedd o ffynonellau posibl i gynhyrchu agregau â'r effaith amgylcheddol lleiaf. Fel rhan o'r newidiadau hyn mae Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru wedi gwella rôl RAWPau i roi adroddiadau asesu a monitro ychwanegol mewn perthynas â materion cynaliadwyedd ehangach ac i roi Datganiadau Technegol Rhanbarthol pob pum mlynedd.

Yng ngoleuni'r newidiadau polisi hyn, mae Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru o'r farn ei bod yn amser priodol i ail-werthuso rôl a diben RAWPau yng Nghymru. Mae'r adroddiad hwn yn cyflwyno canfyddiadau'r gwerthusiad hwnnw. Yn gryno, mae'r canfyddiadau allweddol fel a ganlyn:

Ystyriir bod y **System Cyflenwi Agregau wedi'i Reoli** gan bob rhanddeiliad yn angenrheidiol a'i bod yn gweithio'n dda. Mae'r system yn rhoi cyfradd bwysig o hyder i'r diwydiannau mwynau ac adeiladu o ran diogelwch hirdymor cyflenwadau. Heb hyn, byddai llai o gyfle ar gyfer meddwl yn strategol, llai o gyfle i gyflawni patrymau cyflenwi cynaliadwy a llawer mwy o ddibyniaeth ar y broses apelio, gyda chost uwch i bawb.

Gwelir **Rôl RAWP** wrth fonitro a chyflenwi'r system cyflenwi agregau wedi'i rheoli gan rhanddeiliad hefyd fel rôl bwysig ac angenrheidiol. Heb RAWPau byddai'n llawer anoddach i Lywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru reoli'r system, i ryngweithio â gweithredwyr mwynau neu i ddod i'r consensws sydd ei angen rhwng diwydiant ac Awdurdodau Cynllunio Mwynau er mwyn i'r system weithio'n dda. Ystyriir bod y trefniant presennol o ddau RAWP yng Nghymru yn briodol oherwydd y patrymau cyflenwi a galw gwahanol iawn o fewn y ddau ranbarth. Mae swyddogaethau presennol RAWPau yn briodol ar y cyfan, ond mae angen mireinio rhywfaint.

Ystyriir bod **Aelodaeth RAWP** yn gywir, fwy neu lai, a dylai barhau i gael ffocws technegol, ond un hepgoriad pwysig yw'r sector 'defnyddwyr terfynol'.

Mae'r **Datganiadau Technegol Rhanbarthol** bellach wrth wraidd y system gyflenwi wedi'i rheoli yng Nghymru ac yn cael eu hystyried gan bob ymgynghorai fel datblygiad cadarnhaol. Fodd bynnag, mae angen mireinio ymhellach ac egluro'r statws a pherchnogaeth y dogfennau. Bu'r gwaith o baratoi'r datganiadau yn anodd a chymerodd lawer o amser, a hynny'n bennaf am mai dyma'r tro cyntaf i'r cysyniad RTS gael ei weithredu. Mae diwydiant a'r Awdurdodau Cynllunio Mwynau wedi nodi i eglurder y cyflwyniad, cywirdeb y data a'r gweithdrefnau ar gyfer ymdrin â'r ymatebion ymgynghori oll gael eu cyfaddawdu i raddau amrywiol - efallai oherwydd yr angen i gwblhau'r dogfennau o fewn amserlen dynn. Maent hefyd yn ystyried bod angen ysgrifennu'r dogfennau'n fwy cryno, y tro nesaf y cânt eu hadolygu, a hynny mewn arddull sy'n fwy deniadol ac yn haws i'w dilyn.

Gwelir yr ymdrechion i fynd i'r afael â **Chapasiti Amgylcheddol** (gan ddefnyddio dull IMAECA) a lleihau carbon drwy **Egwyddor Agosatrwydd** gan y rhan fwyaf o rhanddeiliaid fel rhai gwell o bosibl, *mewn egwyddor*, na'r system lai rhagnodol yn Lloegr. Fodd bynnag, mae amheuan o fewn y diwydiant o hyd, yn enwedig o ran dilysrwydd dull IMAECA a phryderon mwy penodol o ran y meini prawf a ddefnyddiwyd a'r ffaith nad yw'r cyfrifiadau **dosranu** ar gyfer Awdurdodau Cynllunio Mwynau unigol yn ymddangos fel petaent yn rhoi unrhyw ystyriaeth i Gapasiti Amgylcheddol na gwahaniaethau o ran galw allanol rhwng gwahanol Awdurdodau (e.e. allforion Agregau â Gofynion Uchel o Dde Cymru ac allforion Calchfaen i Ogledd-orllewin Lloegr o Ogledd Cymru).

Mae RAWPau wedi wynebu nifer o anawsterau wrth **gasglu data**, yn arbennig am agregau eilaidd ac agregau wedi'u hailgylchu. Drwy eu hadroddiadau blynyddol a'r RTS, mae RAWPau wedi nodi bod dibyniaeth llawer o'r data gwreiddiol ar y deunyddiau hyn yn amheus, nid lleiaf oherwydd y gwahaniaethau o ran y dulliau arolwg, gwahaniaethau mewn ffynonellau gwybodaeth a chyfraddau ymateb isel oherwydd effeithiau lludded arolwg. Mae angen data ychwanegol am gludo agregau, er mwyn deall cymhlethdodau sy'n ystumio'r 'egwyddor agosatrwydd' eisoes (e.e. patrymau dosbarthu lleol drwy storffeydd rhyngol, gwaith asffalt a chyfleusterau sypynnu concrid; ac allforion Agregau â Gofynion Uchel i lawer o rannau o Loegr). Mae angen data o'r fath i roi sylfaen ar gyfer mesur effeithiolrwydd unrhyw newidiadau wrth leihau allyriadau carbon yn y dyfodol. Fodd bynnag, mae'r data yn gymhleth ac mae'n cymryd amser hir i'w goladu. Bydd cyfaddawd rhwng cymhlethdod y wybodaeth y gofynnir amdani a chyfanrwydd yr ymatebion arolwg sy'n deillio ohoni bob amser. Y data mwyaf cyflawn a gynhyrchwyd yw'r data gan y gweithredwyr mewn perthynas â'r arolygon Monitro Agregau bob pedair blynedd.

O ran yr **Ysgrifenyddion Technegol**, mae potensial amlwg i ehangu'r rolau hyn ymhellach i roi cyngor technegol a chanllawiau rhagweithiol i Awdurdodau Cynllunio Mwynau, i annog cydweithio rhwng yr Awdurdodau a chydlynu adborth ar y broses o weithredu a'r angen i wella'r RTS. Fodd bynnag, mae rolau'r Ysgrifenyddion Technegol a Chadeiryddion RAWP eisoes yn drwm iawn ar yr Awdurdod Cynllunio Mwynau lletyol ac yn anodd eu cyflawni yn rhan amser. Cymhlethir y sefyllfa gan brinder cronig o swyddogion Awdurdod Cynllunio Mwynau profiadol i gymryd y rôl a'r angen am fwy o gyllid os caiff y rôl ei ehangu ymhellach. Yn yr un modd ag unrhyw gadwyn gyflenwi, mae angen hanfodol am 'gynllunio dilyniant' er mwyn sicrhau y caiff y system ei rheoli'n effeithiol o hyd er mwyn sicrhau diogelwch cyflenwadau parhaus. Felly mae angen nodi strategaeth glir a threfniadau ariannu priodol. Rhoddwyd argymhellion penodol i fynd i'r afael â'r pwyntiau hyn ac i ystyried cryfhau gallu awdurdodau unedol bach i ymgysylltu'n fwy effeithiol yn y broses gynllunio strategol drwy greu grwpiau is-ranbarthol o Awdurdodau Cynllunio Mwynau.

I gloi, gwelodd yr adolygiad hwn fod y RAWPau, ar y cyfan, wedi cyflawni eu rhwymedigaethau hyd eithaf eu gallu. Yn y rhan fwyaf o achosion bu hynny'n ddigon i alluogi'r system i weithio'n dda, ond mae lle i wella mewn meysydd penodol. Lle na chyflawnwyd amcanion y RAWPau yn llawn, neu lle y'u cyflawnwyd ag anhawster a/neu oedi, bu hyn oherwydd cyfuniad o ffactorau allanol yn amrywio o ddiffyg data dibynadwy mewn rhai meysydd/ardaloedd i'r pwysau o ymgymryd â llwythau gwaith mwy yn erbyn amserlenni tynn gydag adnoddau prin. Dylai'r argymhellion amrywiol a amlinellir ym Mhennod 7 o'r adroddiad hwn helpu i fynd i'r afael â'r anawsterau penodol sydd wedi atal gwell perfformiad.

Gellir cael gwybodaeth bellach, gan gynnwys sut i gael copi o'r adroddiad llawn, gan:

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