

SEERAWP South East England Regional Aggregates Working Party

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Minutes of Meeting of SEERAWP held on 21 June 2006 at DCLG Offices, Eland House, Bressenden Place, London

Present:

John Kilford	Chairman	Nigel Jackson	QPA
David Nkrumah-Boateng	SEERA	Lillian Harrison	QPA
Anthea Hoey	Berkshire Unitaries	Bob Smith	QPA
Richard Mathews	Bucks CC	Ken Hobden	QPA
Bryan Geake	Medway	Nick Horsley	QPA
Rebecca Trowse	Milton Keynes	Mark Russell	QPA (BMAPA)
Bill Murphy	Kent CC	Peter Bide	DCLG
Peter Day	Oxfordshire CC	Andrew Lipinski	DCLG
David Lamb	Surrey CC		
Tony Odam	West Sussex CC	Chris Waite	Secretary

and for item 4: Andrew Bloodworth, Fiona McEvoy and Antony Benham (BGS)

1 Welcome & Apologies

1.1 The Chairman welcomed Ken Hobden, Lillian Harrison, Nick Horsley, Tony Odam and David Nkrumah-Boateng to the meeting. Apologies were received from Steve Lamb and Duncan Pollock (QPA), Steve Cole (BAA), James Trimmer (PLA), Bill Mackenzie (ODPM), John Cheston (GOSE), Andrew Brown (E of E RAWP), and Richard Linton (GLA).

2 Minutes and Matters Arising from 23 January 2006 meeting

2.1 The minutes were agreed and the following were dealt with under matters arising:-

para 2.1 : QPA are continuing discussions with English Heritage over archaeological demands. QPA seeks demands proportional to their aggregate proposals and a consistent application nationally.

: no response has been received from GLA concerning SEERA comments on the draft SPG on Design & Construction. It was decided to regard this matter as closed.

para 3.2 : the Secretary had raised the issue of the decline in reserves of sand and gravel at the RAWP Secretaries meeting earlier this year. DCLG has agreed to investigate whether this is just a South East phenomenon, or of wider significance. BGS have been commissioned to analyse reserves by region

from 1990 and provide a commentary which will seek to explain the reasons for the decline in reserves where this applies. The results will be reported to SEERAWP in due course.

para 11.3: no response had been received from the EA on the definition of a 'functional flood plain'. Accordingly, the Secretary had written to DCLG. Peter Bide reported that guidance would be provided in PPS25. It would be for local authorities to define the functional flood plain within the parameters set in the guidance. He also confirmed that the anomaly in the consultation draft would be corrected, ie minerals would be described as compatible in a flood plain area.

3 Minutes and Matters Arising from 23 January 2006 MRG/OMG meeting

3.1 para 4.3: SEERAWP noted that MRG had agreed to its closure, and for OMG to revert to the original 4 industry + 4 MPA officer membership.

: the Chairman drew attention to issues discussed by MRG but not resolved eg CAA safeguarding and abstraction licences. It was agreed that any such remaining issues were for SEERAWP to pursue.

: it was agreed that the Minerals Review Steering Group should be expanded to 4 industry + 4 MPAs and 1 SEERA representative, plus the Secretary.

: Hampshire has arranged a meeting on 30 June in Winchester to review progress on LDSs, benchmarking and co-ordination of AMR and regional AMR requirements.

4 Minerals Review: Presentation by BGS, and associated research

BGS Resource study

- 4.1 Andrew Bloodworth spoke about the work of BGS Minerals UK Centre for Sustainable Development. BGS is the world leader in data resources for minerals and a major UK national provider. He outlined the scope of the data and clients served. The regional reports have been completed for all England (except central London). This is the flagship of BGS work and he encouraged SEERAWP members to use the coverage on the web. BGS is currently running the AM2005 minerals survey amongst other projects. BGS is now moving more into analysis rather than just information reports on data. Much of the data is available on the web www.mineralsuk.com and other data can be obtained on licence.
- 4.2 Tony Benham explained the methodology used by BGS in their Stage 1 identification of un-sterilised resources of soft sand, building sand, hard rock and brick clay, free from 6 national environmental designations, or subject to one or more of them. He illustrated the presentation and referred to the scientific assumptions set out in the 'health warning' notes issued with the papers. He also issued revised tables. BGS are concerned at the very large total resources identified, knowing that a significant proportion would not be commercially viable if more detailed investigations were undertaken using borehole data etc. But this would take months and be too expensive. SEERAWP should recognise the limitations of the results set out in the survey.
- 4.3 Fiona McEvoy then showed BGS mapped findings and how BGS had arrived at its findings through the GIS data sources that had been used. She drew attention to how changes in the assumptions eg a change of the 250 metre buffer zone to say 500 metres would exclude a disproportionate amount of potential resource.
- 4.4 Nigel Jackson referred to the Deposits and Constraints survey undertaken in 1988. QPA wanted to identify whether the BGS figures were compatible with that survey, or to establish why the results differ. Also some resources (thin polygons) might be eliminated as not workable. Bob Smith supported this saying he did not wish to see the gross figures being an overestimate. QPA would take this up with BGS in a technical meeting before their final report, at QPA expense.

- 4.5 A 200m buffer zone around settlements had been introduced in the BGS exercise in order to reflect that operations would be unlikely to be worked abutting development on environmental grounds, and resources would be reduced. The reduction would also take some account of an over all loss of some reserve to new developments to 2026. This approach caused some concern as there is no standard buffer operated by MPAs in the region, or indeed any buffer in some instances. There was also concern that if the buffer represented a proxy for growth in development it should not be misinterpreted, for it did not spatially represent where growth would take place. This needed to be made clear in the BGS 'health notes'.
- 4.6 David Lamb also referred to English Nature proposing a buffer zone of 5 or 10 kilometres around SLA/SAC areas, which had not been taken into account in the survey. Bill Murphy said that he is attending a meeting with EN at which this will be raised, and will report back to MRSG.
- 4.7 BGS were thanked for their presentations and agreed to supply a copy of their illustrations. They were asked to complete their report and accompanying supply of maps.

Other Minerals Review Research

- 4.8 The meeting then turned to other aggregate supplies currently received from outside the South East region. The objective of the research is to establish whether there are sufficient reserves for the region to continue to be supplied from them into the long term.

Marine Aggregates Resources and reserves

- 4.9 The slow determination of GV applications has created a short term problem, but the long term supply of marine aggregate to the region should be secure, providing additional outstanding GV applications are determined and Defra 5 year review and maximum extraction limitation on dredged sand and gravel from the East English Channel do not prove a restriction (see item 7 below).

Capacity at Wharves and Rail Depots

- 4.10 SEERAWP 06/07 reported that Kent had undertaken an assessment of its wharves and rail depots in 2005, including a capacity survey. It showed significant capacity at the wharves, which could handle double current imports with no increase in site area. This is important in that these wharves import some 50% of the SE marine supplies and 80% of crushed rock by sea. In contrast, the Kent survey of rail depots only accounts for 10% of SE rail imports. The capacity of rail depots elsewhere in the region is not available, and Crossrail poses a threat to rail paths and depots on the Great Western Line. The SEERAWP report suggested that it would be desirable to extend this survey to the rest of the region for wharves and rail depots.
- 4.11 David Nkrumah-Boateng said that SEERA was concentrating its resources on dealing with the SE Plan EiP, and the research budget was concentrated on this. He did not foresee funding being available for an extension of the Kent study this year. Bill Murphy said he would provide the cost of the Kent survey to SEERA in confidence. It was agreed that the Secretary would write to SEERA inviting the Assembly to consider the proposed study. Meanwhile, existing sources of data for wharves eg from BMAPA and port statistics would be investigated, and for rail depots and paths SEERAWP would see what information could be gleaned from evidence by EWS and the rail operators at the Crossrail hearings.

Crushed Rock Imports

- 4.12 The reserves of rock supplying the SE by rail are embedded in regional figures for the SW and East Midlands. Nigel Jackson agreed to ask QPA members whether they would agree to reserve data on hard rock reserves which are rail connected and serve SE rail depots being released in a collated form for each of the two regions in a manner that would not enable reserves to be identified for any individual quarry. Would industry do this or could an approach be made via RAWP secretaries to collate reserve data in this manner?

- 4.13 The reserves of quarries supplying the SE from outside England also need to be established. QPA agreed to consider what it could supply from countries including Scotland, Norway Ireland, Wales and France. NJ would respond to both aspects in 4.11 & 4.12 after a QPA meeting on 12 July.

Population /Dwellings

- 4.14 SEERA provided projections of population and dwellings by MPA for the region in 2026 as part of the LUC study on provision of sites for recycling. Revised figures are in preparation.

Minerals Review Stage 2

- 4.15 A limited discussion took place on the next steps, but the meeting agreed with the Chairman that BGS work should be regarded as Stage 1, the intermediate stage under discussion by MRSG on preparation for SA/SEA should be re-named stage 2, and the SA/SEA exercise would be Stage 3. It was also agreed to expand MRSG membership (see para 3.1 above).

5 GOSE : RMS Final Report, SE Plan, Guidelines 3rd Monitoring Report

GOSE RMS final report

- 5.1 A note from John Cheston was read out saying that GOSE had been hoping to publish the alterations to RPG9 Chapters 10 & 11 this week, but thanks to some minor text changes it had to go back to the printers. The document should now be published next week, with an electronic version on GOSE web site and hard copies to follow later.

Draft SE Plan

- 5.2 The draft adopts the wording in GOSE Proposed Changes whilst awaiting GOSE final report, - except for policy M2 which is expanded to include the apportionment of provision for recycling. Therefore the draft does not take on board the changes in the text sought by SEERAWP.
- 5.3 SEERAWP agreed to support the minerals section and policies, but a letter to the EiP Panel would seek the amendments previously sought in the text and suggest that aggregate figures in para 21.1 are updated from 2001 to 2004 figures. SEERA would be sent a copy of the letter.

Aggregate Guidelines 3rd Monitoring Report

- 5.4 TSG had considered the 3rd Monitoring report at its meeting on 1 June, and NCG will consider it on 10 July. A summary of the findings of the report were set out in SEERAWP 06/08. The monitoring report concluded that the revised forecasts show a small overall decrease in demand for 2001-2016 (some 2.5%). This did not warrant any revision to the June2003 Guidelines. SEERAWP accepted this conclusion.

6 AM2004

- 6.1 AM2004 was attached to SEERAWP 06/09 as an appendix. The Secretary reported that he had circulated a draft in May, and the appendix includes minor amendments arising from the views received. One further change is necessary to Table 1, which should give a nil figure for permissions for Berkshire Unitaries as the 45,000 tonnes refers to an extension of time rather than any new reserve. This amends the total additional permitted reserve in 2004 to 2,881,000 tonnes for the region ie less than 1/3rd of the sales in 2004. There is clearly a need for more applications from the industry.
- 6.2 Peter Day pointed out an anomaly in the figures for 2003 in Tables 2 and 3, and there are there other minor text corrections to make. Appendix B to AM2004 should be the up to date position in respect of key milestones in DPDs; SEERAWP representatives were asked to advise the Secretary if this was not the case. AM2004 also needs figures prepared to illustrate the tables.

- 6.3 Subject to such amendments, the Chairman and Secretary were authorised to clear AM2004 for printing and publishing, and the report to be placed on the SEERA and DCLG web sites.

7 Marine Aggregate Resources/Reserves and Marine Regulations

- 7.1 The Secretary reported in SEERAWP 06/10 that a second favourable GV decision had been made on 15 May 2006 on Areas 473, 474 and 475 in the East English Channel. These were the areas on which DCLG had advised that it was 'minded to give' a favourable GV in the report to January SEERAWP.
- 7.2 A copy of the BMAPA and the Crown Estate published document setting out the level of marine aggregate reserves in the seas around England at the end of 2005 was attached as an appendix to SEERAWP 06/10. This showed that the East Coast would not be able to continue production beyond mid 2007 unless dredging operations change. Such changes, involving longer on station dredging, have economic consequences, and a likely picture is that production will fall from its current supply of some 8mtpa to a lower figure. The Thames region could not fill such a gap in supply as it provides less than 1mtpa. The South Coast would be more likely to be looked to, again with economic consequences in terms of the longer sea delivery to Thames wharves.
- 7.3 The report concluded that the time taken to arrive at GV decisions had taken so long, with others still outstanding for some months although at the last stage of determination, there is a short term marine aggregate supply problem. Production from the EEC would not be able to meet the Defra constraint of a maximum of 4.25mtpa being dredged in Year 1, and whether production in the subsequent 4 years would increase to the maximum of 8.5mtpa depends upon licensing, progress with dredging by the marine aggregates industry, and possibly further GV favourable determinations. This 'just in time' policy is unsatisfactory, and needs to be replaced by a long term strategy.
- 7.4 The long awaited draft Marine Regulations were issued on 5 June, with comments sought by 28 August. SEERAWP hoped that the Regulations would operate in a more efficient way than the current process.
- 7.5 Mark Russell for BMAPA said that the reserves set out in the BMAPA document were not once and for all totals from within existing licences, and with new licences, the GV decisions in the EEC would double the national marine primary aggregate reserve. BMAPA is concerned that if Regulations go to Defra to determine, Defra have no policy responsibility for maintaining aggregate supply.
- 7.6 The Chairman reminded SEERAWP that SEERA had written to DCLG in the past to draw attention to the importance of marine aggregates to this region, and the need to take less time over making decisions on GV applications. He proposed that SEERA should consider whether the time is right to write to Defra on the consequences of delay. He also recommended that Defra be invited from time to time to SEERAWP, including to the September meeting.
- 7.7 The Chairman said that it was not clear that RAWPs should consider marine aggregate supplies as well as land-won aggregate. Peter Bide replied saying they do have such a role and would write a letter to the Chairman confirming this. The letter could then be reported to the next RAWP secretaries meeting to advise all RAWPs.
- 7.8 SEERAWP decided that:
- i) BMAPA be congratulated for providing a sound basis for an annual monitor of marine aggregate reserves.
 - ii) DCLG, Defra, Crown Estate and BMAPA be urged to resolve any outstanding issues such that the outstanding GV applications which are at the last stage in the current process can be determined, Crown Estate licences issued and marine dredging and delivery begin.
 - iii) SEERA be invited to consider whether to make any further representation to Defra on the consequences of delay in GV decisions.

iv) Defra be invited to SEERAWP in September 2006.

v) DCLG be advised that the proposals to replace existing GV and Crown Estate procedures with the revised system are supported, provided

a) the system operates in a more effective manner, including in respect of time taken for an application (including pre-application discussions) to be determined, and

b) applications in the pipeline are enabled to transfer to the Regulations at the appropriate step in the revised procedure, incurring no time penalty

8 Marine Bill

8.1 A consultation document on the proposed Marine Bill was issued by Defra in March 2006, with comments sought by 23 June. SEERAWP 06/11 suggested a response to the document, principally focusing on three sections, Marine Spatial Planning, Licensing Marine Activities, and A Marine Management Organisation. This response drew heavily on the likely views of BMAPA.

8.2 Mark Russell said that Defra had involved BMAPA in discussions before this consultation document was issued and Defra deserved credit for that and for the breath of scope in the document. SEERAWP should recognise that this consultation was but one step in a programme. In any reply SEERAWP needs first to emphasise the importance of marine aggregate supply to the region, particularly in economic terms and to seek a marine aggregates supply policy.

8.3 Peter Bide agreed, saying that the Marine Bill needs to reflect the whole spectrum of government policies, not just those for the environment.

8.4 SEERAWP agreed to expand the recommendation in the report to include the above points.

9 QPA Sustainable Development Strategy: Annual Report

9.1 SEERAWP welcomed the positive initiative taken by QPA in producing the report and looked forward to an annual production. SEERAWP agreed a response to QPA reflecting the points raised in SEERAWP 06/12 on partnership with stakeholders, restoration of land, biodiversity and geodiversity, and providing essential materials.

10 Annual Report for 2005-2006

10.1 The Secretary submitted an Annual Report for 2005-2006, SEERAWP 06/13, drawing attention to what had been achieved in meeting the objectives in SEERAWP 2005-2006 work programme. SEERAWP approved the report, including the proposed programme for 2006-2007. It was agreed that the report be made available for public inspection, including on the Assembly and DCLG web sites.

10.2 The Chairman drew attention to there being no annual report on OMG activities. It is recognised that OMG is a SEERA group, but the activities of OMG is of relevance to many industry and MPA representatives on SEERAWP. It was agreed that the Secretary would attach an Appendix on OMG to the Annual Report, starting with SEERAWP 06/13 for 2005-2006.

11 DCLG

11.1 Peter Bide reported that MPS1 is to be published in September ie the core document, 4 Annexes, including aggregates, and the Good Practice Guidance. The 2005 national collation and the 2005 survey of arisings and use of alternatives are under way through contracts with BGS and Capita Symonds respectively. DCLG also has a joint minerals contract with BGS including Minerals UK. RAWP contracts have now been referred back to the procurement arm for approval.

- 11.2 Nigel Jackson said that industry remained concerned at the proposed Supplementary Planning Gain which started out aimed at housing development, for which it might be suitable. But it has since been aimed at all development, including mineral working, to which it is unsuited as minerals are extracted over a long period and increased land values flowing from an aggregates permission is not of the same uplift as for housing. PB agreed and DCLG are making the same points.

12 Any Other Business

- 12.1 The Secretary pointed out to SEERAWP that the AM2005 national and regional survey would not provide the same detail for rail depots and recycling sites as the SE AM surveys. AM2005 will produce a figure for aggregate volumes received by rail into the 4 sub regions in the SE. But each of these sub regions has 3 - 6 rail depots. AM2005 will not identify sales from rail depots in any one MPA area. The Capita Symonds 2005 survey is designed to establish the volume of recycling in the same sub regions, and again will not identify figures for any one MPA area. East Sussex are concerned that the SE sequence of data on recycling is not broken., and may survey their recycling sites if a SE survey is not pursued.
- 12.2 SEERAWP decided that a SE survey of rail depots should proceed, as depot operators would not be directly contacted for sales as part of the national and regional AM2005, but a SE survey of recycling sites should not proceed as the operators would be consulted by Capita Symonds, and a second survey would lead to confusion. The Secretary would issue forms to MPAs to issue to rail depots.
- 12.3 The Secretary apologised for the attachment under this item not being the up to date Key Milestones. He reiterated the request under item 6 above for MPAs to advise if the Appendix B to AM2004 needs amendment - as this should be the latest Key Milestones chart. Ken Hobday said that QPA found the chart helpful, and concentrated its involvement at the preferred options and proposals stage. QPA sought early consultation by MPAs and would be issuing a guidance note on this by the end of the year.

13 Date of Next Meeting

- 13.1 It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Monday 25 September and the following meeting on Tuesday 23 January 2007. Both meetings will be held at Eland House, Bressenden Place, London. The September meeting will be in Conference rooms GJ/K, starting at 10 30am. OMG will meet in the same room that afternoon at 2.00pm.