

SEERAWP South East England Regional Aggregates Working Party

Technical Secretary: C R Waite, 22 Sittingbourne Road, Maidstone, Kent ME14 5LW
: Tel: 01622 764335, e-mail: chriswaiteplanning@blueyonder.co.uk

Minutes of Meeting of SEERAWP held on 23 January 2007 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 Matthews	Bucks CC	Stewart Mitchell	QPA
Tony Cook	E Sussex CC	Duncan Pollock	QPA
Roger Stow	Hants CC	Ken Hobden	QPA
Dick Feasey	Kent CC	Mark Russell	QPA
Peter Day	Oxfordshire CC	Peter Huxtable	BAA
David Lamb	Surrey CC	Peter Bide	DCLG
Tony Odam	West Sussex CC	Bill Mackenzie	DCLG
Chris Waite	Secretary	Andrew Lipinski	DCLG
		John Cheston	GOSE

Also invited for item 4: Denis Spooner DCLG, and David Swepson Defra.

1 Welcome & Apologies

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed Dick Feasey from Kent, and Denis Spooner and David Swepson to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Richard Read and Jeremy Smith (Hants CC), Bill Murphy (IoW), Rebecca Trowse (Milton Keynes), Steve Lamb (QPA), and Steve Cole (BAA).
- 1.2 The Chairman said that he was retiring on 31 March 2007, and would no longer have a role with West Sussex County Council. He had therefore asked DCLG and the Regional Assembly whether it would be appropriate for him to continue in that role. They had both replied positively, and he was very happy to continue to stay on as Chairman provided SEERAWP was comfortable with that arrangement. If anyone else wished to take on the role he would step down. The one caveat he raised was that he could not now attend SEERAWP on the date of 25 June arranged for the next meeting. BAA responded that this would suit them as it was their AGM and coincided with Hillhead. The Chairman said he would not seek a decision now, but return to this under AOB.

2 Minutes and Matters Arising from 25 September 2006 meeting

- 2.1 The minutes were agreed.

2.2 The following were dealt with under matters arising:-

para 4.2 The tables and maps that needed amending by BGS had now been completed and distributed.

para 4.5 The Secretary had not written to the operators of quarries sending crushed rock to the SE by rail to ask for the life of the remaining reserves in the quarries. He had discovered a chart which had been displayed at RICS/QPA Conference in May 2006 which graphically provided the answers. This showed that together the estimated life of the quarries was 20 or more years. However, in 10-15 years time a number of the quarries would need further reserves, or new quarries would be needed if supplies were to be maintained. The chart would be circulated with the minutes.

para 4.6 Hard rock reserves in Norway: these had been confirmed as some 300Mt.

para 5.3 Contact names for AM2006: QPA asked for a basic list of contacts to be sent to them. DCLG agreed to do this, using the BGS/AMRI list. QPA would then invite company comments/amendments. This needs to be done within a month or so in order that MPAs are given a list via RAWP secretaries and the start of AM2006 is not unduly delayed. The SE survey also includes rail depots for which there may need to be a separate company contact.

3 SE Plan, EIP and Minerals Review

3.1 David Nkrumah-Boateng reported on the SE Plan and the Minerals Review Steering Group. He said that the timetable was subject to some revision in order that it fitted with the Regional Assembly Planning Committee meetings. There would also be some cost to be written into the contract for the data base referred to in 17 December note of MRSG.

3.2 DCLG said that the notes at the foot of the timetable showing how its programme for the 4th Guidelines monitor linked in with the timetable depended on them having timely access to in-house economic expertise which was currently in short supply. SEERAWP were concerned at this and a letter would be sent pointing out the importance of timely monitoring of the 2003 Guidelines to the sustainability of the managed aggregate supply system.

3.3 As the review was focused on a re-apportionment of the 13.25mtpa of land-won sand and gravel and 2.2mtpa of crushed rock in SE Plan policy M3, MRSG proposed not to have a separate assessment for soft sand. Nigel Jackson for QPA said that separate provision for soft sand is desirable and would reflect MPS1. SEERAWP asked MRSG to re-consider their approach.

4 Marine Aggregates

4.1 The Chairman referred to a letter in response to him dated 19 January from Peter Bide regarding the role of SEERAWP in relation to marine aggregates, and read out parts of it. The letter confirmed that the RAWP should survey and consider the contribution of marine dredged aggregates to the supply stream, and be able to provide advice to DCLG and the RPB on trends in supply through monitoring. However, RAWPs should not engage in policy. The Chairman asked for clarity on this last point.

4.2 Peter Bide said the RAWPs should stick to their technical role, and recognise a demarcation between their role and that of the RPBs which might take up policy matters with DCLG. This was accepted by SEERAWP, and after discussion it was agreed that RAWPs might consider the effectiveness of policy, and advise DCLG and the RPB, but should not seek to develop policy. The second sentence in Peter Bide's letter should be read as: 'They (RAWPs) are not required to, and should not, develop aggregate supply policy'. A copy of the letter was asked to be issued with the meeting minutes.

4.3 Denis Spooner spoke to 3 papers which had been distributed to SEERAWP a day or so before the meeting but not received or read by everyone. He said that the regulatory procedures were introduced in 1968 and are long outworn. Comments to the Crown Estate in the early days had now

become a quasi environmental consent. He explained the 5 stages of the GV procedures. The new Regulations to be introduced would establish a due process, and only worked up applications would be registered. From 1 April Defra would be responsible for GV applications. All applications submitted would continue to determination under that process.

- 4.4 Denis Spooner had also provided updates on the South Coast and East Coast GV applications, which included the aggregate volumes applied for, and a summary of the GV applications and the volumes decided over the last 3 years between January 2004-2007. He said that a huge volume of marine aggregate had been approved in the East Channel Region, sufficient to provide supply into the long term. Some 180Mt had been given a favourable GV, and with West Bassurelle likely to receive a decision in February, this would raise the figure to some 300Mt. However, the rate of extraction from these areas in the ECR is limited by the constraint set by Defra of a total of 4.25Mt in the first year (September 2006-2007), and then no more than 8.5Mt in each year to September 2011. Towards the end of the first and second five year period these limitations will be reviewed by Defra.
- 4.5 Mark Russell (MR) said that with these GV decisions and extraction now having begun in the ECR, long term extraction had been secured, dialogue with DCLG and Defra is good, and BMAPA are supportive of the transfer of responsibility to Defra. A letter had been sent by Lester Hicks to BMAPA setting out the arrangements for the transfer of responsibility. The Chairman asked Peter Bide to establish whether this letter could be issued with SEERAWP minutes.
- (PB has confirmed the letter may be sent and it is attached to these minutes)*
- 4.6 The Secretary asked whether a demand on marine aggregates of some 16.5mtpa (SE and London regions 6mtpa + 4mtpa, and exports running at 6.5mtpa) was consistent with a limitation of 8.5mtpa on production from the ECR, leaving 8mtpa to be supplied from other marine regions. MR said he did not doubt that other marine regions could and would supply the 8mtpa.
- 4.7 MR went on to say that the BMAPA was working closely with Defra over the large number of licence renewals that would be needed by 2014 – some 40 in 36 areas. A Regional Environmental Assessment was prepared for the ECR. It is intended to follow the same approach, preparing an REA for the Isle of Wight, Thames, East Coast and Humber areas.
- 4.8 In response to a question on investment, MR said that the release of so much aggregate in the ECR provided a much more favourable climate for investment. Ports did not restrict capacity, and the smaller south coast ports had a substantial Isle of Wight reserve to draw upon, and which with ECR coming on stream would not in future be looked to supply the Thames ports. The dredging fleet has an ageing profile and would need substantial investment over time.
- 4.9 Turning to the letter sent from SEERAWP to DCLG after the last meeting referring to a policy vacuum for marine aggregates, a response dated 22 November from Lester Hicks had been received. This set out the policy on marine aggregates in MMG1 and MPS1. SEERAWP agreed that there is not a policy vacuum and regarded the matter as closed. Peter Bide was asked to thank Lester for his letter.
- 4.10 However, the letter indicated that The Netherlands, for example, was now importing all its aggregates. The Chairman therefore asked whether the consumption of marine aggregates in mainland European countries adjoining the North Sea such as Belgium and the Netherlands was being monitored, and whether future changes in consumption in these or other countries might affect aggregate supply in England. He was advised that BGS collect and publish such statistics, these countries are also extracting marine aggregates from their part of the continental shelf, and there are a range of alternative supplies, including crushed rock by sea, eg from Norway, if demand increased.

5 AM2005 Draft Regional Report

- 5.1 The Secretary reported that the draft sent out with the agenda had amendments from that sent out earlier, and he had now received the figures to illustrate the report tables. There remained a few gaps

in the Appendices which he was seeking to fill. Subject to views at the meeting, he invited SEERAWP to authorise the Chairman and Secretary to add the appropriate additions to the Appendices and then issue the report and ask for it to be placed on the SEERA and DCLG web sites.

- 5.2 Further amendments were made at the meeting and the recommendation was agreed. Responses to fill the gaps in the Appendices were sought by 26 January.

6 Primary Aggregate Reserves in England 1990-2004

- 6.1 The decline in land-won sand and gravel reserves in the SE appeared initially to be unique to this region, but was then discovered to be of wider significance. DCLG appointed consultants to establish the data for both sand and gravel and crushed rock. The resulting report published in November 2006 shows that for sand and gravel all but one region shows a decline, four regions experiencing a decline of 25% or more, and the SE having the most significant decline (61%). The report concludes that in the long term this rate of decline nationally is not sustainable and needs to be addressed if security of supply is to be maintained.
- 6.2 The situation with crushed rock is different with reserves having increased overall, although some regions have shown a decline of 20-33% in reserves.
- 6.3 Lillian Harrison said that part of the problem with sand and gravel is that MPAs find it easier to rely on allocations that have not been taken up, rather than investigating whether they are unlikely to be worked for some reason eg ownership, and allocating new sites. Ken Hobden supported this and said that MPAs still tended to regard 7 years reserves as a maximum rather than a minimum. This latter point was countered by MPAs pointing out that sales in the SE are 25% below the Guideline figure.
- 6.4 In view of the conclusions of the report, DCLG hopes with ASLF funding to let a project to investigate why aggregate applications are not being made and the extent to which, and reasons why, applications are withdrawn.

7 Mineral Extraction & the Historic Environment

- 7.1 SEERAWP 07/04 drew attention to the consultation draft of a policy statement drawn up by English Heritage aimed for use by government, the minerals industry and local authorities among others. SEERAWP were invited to consider whether to make a response, or leave that to individual members.
- 7.2 The consultation draft was criticised for its timing immediately after MPS1 had been published setting policy and guidance for mineral extraction. SEERAWP also felt that English Heritage is an advisory body, and should not be preparing policy statements. QPA and BAA would each be sending a strong response and copy them to the Secretary.
- 7.3 SEERAWP decided not to send a response in its name, unless subsequent to the meeting a member view is felt to justify sending a response. In that case a draft reply would be circulated before being sent by the Chairman.

8 2006 Annual Report and 2007 Work Programme

- 8.1 SEERAWP 07/05 summarised how SEERAWP fared in pursuing its 2006 programme, and proposed a programme for 2007. The Secretary drew attention to two aspects that were not fulfilled as proposed. No inter-regional dialogue at RAWP level had been undertaken with the SW and E Midlands regions on which the SE depended for crushed rock imports, although discussions had taken place at Secretary level. Consultation on the the review of policy M3 apportionment might provide an opportunity for dialogue in 2007. The other aspect was the publication of AM2004 in July 2006, 18 months after the relevant data.

- 8.2 The work programme for 2007 was agreed subject to the wording in the item on reserves of land-won sand and gravel being substituted by a reference to the DCLG project to establish why applications are not being made.

9 DCLG

- 9.1 Peter Bide reported that MPS1, Annexes and GPG had been well received.
- 9.2 The Aggregate Minerals 2005 survey results are being drafted, and RAWP Secretaries have been consulted on any confidentiality issues in the draft tables. The report is expected to be published in April or May.
- 9.3 The 2005 CE&DW and Secondary Materials survey report was at the printers and should be issued in mid February.
- 9.4 A Planning White paper is to be issued this spring reflecting the Barker report. DCLG is seeking to keep minerals out of this paper in view of the recent issue of MPS1.
- 9.5 Peter Bide reported that DCLG hopes to undertake four ASLF projects in 2007:
- a study on whether the findings of the Verney Report are still valid
 - an assessment nationally (England) of unconstrained reserves of sand and gravel and crushed rock, together with consideration of the prospects of aggregate supply for the next 20-30 years, including a discussion of alternative aggregate supply scenarios
 - an assessment of minerals (aggregates) planning permissions made, withdrawn and refused and granted over time, and to consider why sand and gravel reserves have generally been declining
 - to develop a case for the economic and social need in England for indigenous mineral production

The purpose of these studies is to support the long term future of the managed aggregate supply system.

10 Any Other Business

- 10.1 The note of 25 September OMG and Key Milestones chart was received. Amendments to the Key Milestones are likely after April.
- 10.2 Duncan Pollock reported that the QPA/RTPI Conference will be at Wolverhampton on 26 April.
- 10.3 Duncan Pollock said that this would be the last SEERAWP meeting he would attend as he retires in February. He recalled joining the Kent and East Sussex RAG in the 1970s and quoted a report of that time which showed that little has changed regarding the issues faced by minerals both then and now. The Chairman thanked him for the invaluable contribution he had made to the RAWP over such a long period and wished him well in his retirement. This was warmly endorsed by the meeting.
- 10.4 Returning to the issue of Chairman, SEERAWP confirmed that it would be happy for the Chairman to continue in that role.

11 Date of Next Meeting

- 11.1 It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Friday 8 June 2007 at 10 30am, and will be in Room GL/K at Eland House, Bressenden Place, London. This will be followed by an OMG meeting at 2pm. A date of Monday 10 September 2007 was selected for the following SEERAWP and OMG meeting.

