

**North Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party.
Regional Technical Statement – Aggregate Minerals.**

Technical Sub-Group Meeting 6 January 2006. Mold.

Present.

Gareth Jones	Chair & Gwynedd
Jeremy Gibbins	RAWP Secretary
Sue Martin	Welsh Assembly Government
Roger Bennion	Flintshire
Paul Charmbury	AMSL
Viv Russell	QPA Wales
Darrell Williams	Independent Operators
Andrew Dale	CCW

1. Apologies - none [SB - Steve Bool, S Wales RAWP Secretary apologised as unable to attend as promised]

2. Notes of TSG, 7 November 2005 accepted as accurate.

3. Matters arising. Agreed that all matters arising best dealt with under main Agenda headings.

4. Feedback on RTS Members Forum meeting of 9 November.

GJ disappointing attendance referred to by Chair. No members from Denbighshire or Wrexham.

Chair appointed – Dyfed Edwards, Gwynedd

DW queried continuity with Gwynedd Council relinquishing lead authority status.

GJ considered it the best nomination under the prevailing circumstances.

AD asked for a list of political Members.

ACTION; JHG to circulate.

JHG confirmed that RTS Members Forum had resolved;

- that individual members should be allowed to be accompanied to meetings by one technical representative of the authority they represent
- that meetings should be held only when there was a specific need for a political decision to be made.

SM enquired as to minimum meetings per annum.

ACTION; JHG to check Memorandum of Understanding position. [confirmed as a minimum of one meeting per year. – JHG]

5. Regional Technical Statement.

GJ expressed concern over the changing Industry position as noted from the S. Wales TSG meeting of December '05.

VR QPA had been concerned that the early appearance of the S Wales RTS Options Paper was bypassing proper discussion of the issues. There was now a new S. Wales RAWP approach. The QPA still had a number of concerns such as confidentiality and

apportionment, by region or by mpa, which would have to be resolved by the QPA board.

The QPA Industry side had undertaken to cooperate in the collecting of information and this will be assisted by the production of an agreed 'process flow chart' being prepared by SB for S Wales.

SB had issued a formal letter requesting QPA members information. Copy tabled.

JHG noted that N. Wales would be expected to issue the same letter.

VR recommended awaiting formal QPA response to S. Wales which should be available before the next N. Wales RAWP meeting on 25th January.

RB considered QPA should meet both RAWP Secretaries.

PC noted that QPA did not represent all interested parties in Wales.

GJ noted that requests for information need also to be made to independents and other producers.

RB considered that present confusion might be improved by a simple 'Mission Statement' from the RAWPs as to the RTS aims & objectives and based on the Minerals Technical Advice Note.

SM considered sufficient information was already in Issues Paper.

DW concerned that the Assembly may lose patience with the industry for delays to the RTS.

RB the RTS is intended to help industry to gain access to the resources and reserves it needs but the Final Issues Paper was lacking in some basic issues.

SM considered that the 'mission statement' is already clear from the Minerals Technical Advice Note. The Final Issues Paper could not be rewritten now. Everyone had had their chance to respond to consultation.

PC could not recall AMSL having received a copy during the consultation process

JHG believed that all RAWP members had been consulted.

RB & PC considered that it would help to have a simplified 'mission statement'.

ACTION; the Final Issues Paper should be attached to the agenda of the next RAWP meeting and an invitation for further comments made within a strictly defined time limit – say end February.

VR referred to the national QPA

JHG concerned that QPA Wales's views as important as QPA England.

VR QPA had tended to ignore the developing situation in Wales but is now geared up to get involved.

AD suggested an outline of proposed RTS contents would clarify the process.

GJ noted that the Issues Paper is in fact just that; it can be amended and was not intended to give answers.

AD a statement could include such references as the pressure on the Clwydian Range and in environmental capacity terms the possibility of limited room for expansion aggregate minerals exports to England - sustainability issues.

RB remained concerned over the lack of specific references to a number of basic matters in the Final Issues Paper such as overall supply patterns and transportation.

VR was uncertain how flexible the industry could be but considered that the RTS 'Process Map' being prepared by S Wales will provide useful clarification.

JHG there seem to be concerns that the Final Issues Paper is lacking in scope, but part of the problem was the poor consultation response. This was disappointing but not unexpected. There had been no spare capacity to chase up missing responses.

PC asked whether AMSL had been consulted.

JHG confirmed that all RAWP members had been consulted, and the process had been well underway before PC had joined the TSG.

SM noted that all had been given the opportunity to comment.

JHG given the significant time already elapsed, while the Final Issues Paper could not now be effectively changed it should be possible to include further observations / comment on key issues, by way of a mission statement, 'Process Map', 'Schematic Flow Chart' ** from RAWP members at and immediately after the next RAWP meeting.

ACTION In the interests of improving the depth of representations on the Final Issues Paper a further opportunity to comment thereon would be offered at the next RAWP meeting, the results to be incorporated under a separate heading.

The current 'edition' of the Final Issues Paper would not be changed.

IMAECA update.

JHG confirmed that it had been successfully installed on his dedicated laptop in accordance with Assembly protocol. It was not proving particularly easy to master. Despite an Assembly representative's best efforts it had not been technically possible to establish individual geographic area-based files, as had been hoped, for each of the N. Wales authorities, or to prevent the software analysing all constraints over the whole of Wales when focussing on smaller administrative areas.

DW enquired as to its availability.

SM confirmed that it was available to view by appointment. It had to be remembered that IMAECA was only one tool in the overall RTS process and did not in itself provide any guidance or answers in terms of the future operation of the N. Wales minerals industry. An IMAECA red quadrant or grid square did not mean 'no quarrying'.

RB was concerned that the restricted access to the geological database used by IMAECA was an unreasonable restriction on information which could and should be available directly to the N. Wales mineral planning authorities.

SM confirmed that the geological information layer had been assembled and licenced for use in the IMAECA Study only. However, the information itself was not confidential and was available to any mineral planning authority prepared to pay for it.

RB the information was not available from the BGS because it was assembled by Liverpool University.

SM saw nothing to prevent any mineral planning authority from purchasing the information they required through the BGS.

SEA/HIA

SM had understood that Bridgend had undertaken to look into the implications of the impact of SEA/HIA regulation on the RTS. This had not happened and the Assembly was now undertaking a scoping report. It seemed likely that the Assembly would be funding SEA and she was concerned that this should commence as soon as possible to ensure that EC Regs were fully complied with. The funding and implementation of HIA, while a lesser problem, remained unresolved.

6. N. Wales RAWP administration update

SM despite early preliminary interest from two N. Wales authorities, none now wished to take the lead authority role. The Assembly had a number of funding

options, but was unable to second any of its own staff to the post, despite in-house interest.

GJ confirmed that Gwynedd would continue to chair the RAWP until end of the Assembly contract on 31 March 2006. It would provide the Technical Sub-Group chair in the interim and RTS Members Forum chair for the agreed period.

JHG was disappointed at the poor response from N. Wales authorities, and concerned that there was now little likelihood of the Assembly being able to appoint a successor Secretary before he retired on 31 March.

7. AOB

VR advised that invitations to the Wales QPA annual dinner on 23 March would shortly be issued to all TSG members.

8. Next Meeting.

RB undertook to book room for next meeting on March 14th at 11.00. [since revised to March 21, same time and venue]

** ['Key Issues Flow Chart Timetable' has since been suggested – JHG]