

DRAFT MINUTES

East of England Aggregates Working Party

Meeting on 14 June 2017 starting at 2pm

Venue: County Hall, Market Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH

ATTENDEES

Members	
Richard Greaves	Essex County Council (Chairman)
Ann Barnes	Cambridgeshire County Council
Roy Romans	Bedfordshire Authorities
Alethea Evans	Essex County Council
Trish Carter-Lyons	Hertfordshire County Council
Richard Drake	Norfolk County Council
Chris Stanek	Peterborough City Council
Graham Gunby	Suffolk County Council
Others	
Kirsten Hannaford-Hill	Aggregate Industries/MPA
Chris Hemmingsley	Brett/MPA
Keith Bird	Hanson/MPA
Mark North	MPA
Mike Pendock	Tarmac/MPA
Apologies	
Peter Dawes	Frimstone Ltd/BAA
Richard Hatter	Thurrock Borough Council
Eamon Mythen	DCLG
Richard Read	SEEAWP, LAWP

Item No.	Subject	Owner
1	Welcome, Introductions & Apologies	RG
	Apologies – as set out on previous sheet.	
2	Minutes of the last meeting & matters arising	RG/SEM
	<p>SEM commented that EM had now confirmed that funding for AWP's was in place for 2017/18, although DCLG has requested that invoices not be submitted for this quarter due to other pressures so a 6 monthly invoice would be submitted in due course.</p> <p>Annual Monitoring Survey Forms – SEM confirmed that these had been collected from other AWP's but no opportunity to contrast and compare yet as focus has been on producing the Draft AWP. Aim is to undertake that exercise over the summer and circulate findings for discussion ahead of the Group's October meeting with the aim of agreeing any changes ready for use next year.</p> <p>Mineral Safeguarding – No update on this following talks between RH and James Cutting at Suffolk CC. SEM will chase RH. GG asked for the Draft Minutes to be amended to reflect his comments at the last meeting that the experience of Mineral Safeguarding/MCAs in Suffolk has not been particularly helpful given they have not achieved what they aim to, although SCC propose to update what they have in line with national guidance. RR reported that experience in Bedfordshire Authorities had been positive citing examples of industrial sand having been extracted prior to development and 1,500 potential housing sites have been assessed as to any conflict with mineral safeguarding areas and it has been helpful to do so at this early stage rather than await for an application to be submitted. RR recognised that this may be easier for unitary authorities although AE reported similarly positive outcomes having engaged with 12 district councils in Essex and ECC would not be relaxing its approach to MSAs / MCAs in respect of potential housing sites.</p> <p>In response to a query as to how these were assessed it was explained that the approach is to advise the developer to prepare a mineral resource assessment. Ranking could then be applied giving greater importance to sites adjacent to existing sites. AE commented that such an assessment should be provided prior to allocating housing sites in local plans. RR commented that the Bedfordshire Authorities aim to provide a range of housing sites, although many of those put forward for allocation fail for reasons other than conflict with MSAs.</p> <p>RD reported that NCC took a similar approach checking whether a long list of sites are on MSAs and, if in excess of</p>	<p>SEM</p> <p>SEM JS</p>

	<p>1ha, policy requires applicant to undertake a mineral resource assessment and then a mineral neutral approach to any development. This has largely worked in Norfolk and helpful having this flagged up as a bullet point in policy to address and to strengthen the hand of the planners.</p> <p>In response to a question as to whether any guidance had been produced on how to undertake such assessments, RR confirmed that guidance was available on CBC's website on how this should be undertaken in line with the policy. This guidance had been drawn up taking into account that produced for NCC and Hants CC. RD reported similar guidance on NCC's website. RD had received no feedback on any cost-benefit analysis but commented that operators recognised benefits e.g. screening material on site for re-use as part of a development rather than incurring transport costs to import material.</p> <p>In MN's experience there appeared a difference across authorities, with safeguarding working for some whilst others struggled. MN noted that Adrian Cooper (Shropshire CC) had briefed PINS on safeguarding and the MPA similarly propose to raise awareness with PINS.</p> <p>KH-H made the point that assessments received back from prospective housing developers needed to be quantified as to why a site's mineral resource may not be considered viable, a matter industry should support.</p> <p>MN suggested an opportunity exists to produce best practice guidance for undertaking mineral resource assessments, possibly with case studies, and would explore with POS.</p> <p>RG referred to a recent planning inquiry at which a colleague gave evidence although the Inspector ultimately took the view that the site was not a preferred site for mineral extraction, although not the point of a mineral safeguarding area. MN noted that the loss of an experienced cohort of M & W Inspectors had led to AC's approach to PINS.</p>	
3	Annual Monitoring Survey	All

	<p>JS highlighted key points arising from the Draft Annual Monitoring Survey (AMS) 2016 circulated prior to the meeting. A view had been expressed as to whether the AMS should be presented primarily from the position of using 10 year sales data with lesser emphasis given to the sub-national figures given these were becoming obsolete and little likelihood of new ones being issued. Alternatively that approach could be taken in respect of the 2017 AMS. It was pointed out that Table 3 presents both analyses. After some discussion AB suggested that, since the AWP had opted to adopt the 10 year sales data during 2016, it made sense to retain the AMS as drafted for 2016 but switch the emphasis for the 2017 AMS going forward. This was agreed.</p> <p>With reference to Table 6 (<i>'Major Construction Projects'</i>) JS explained that the Bedfordshire Authorities had taken the view in view of housing developments that only in excess of 1,000 units really qualified as 'major' in terms of being regionally important in their demand for aggregate and sought some consistency to this interpretation. However, he recognised that this approach could discount several developments of a few hundred units which collectively could amount to 1,000 units. MN noted that 200 units still represented 40,000 tonnes of sand & gravel. The down-side to this would be a lengthy list.</p> <p>RG noted a reference in the Somerset LAA (p7) to major projects which refers to the total number of new build units in that year and suggested these need to be captured. Some discussion as to whether the AMR should capture completions or permissions. Data should be readily available on permissions granted against planned targets. RD noted that an annualised target could be produced from 5 years of new builds which LA's expect to complete. RR felt it important to include what's been permitted as well and the survey forms could be adjusted to reflect this next year. KB suggested it would helpful if such data could be tracked as a trend over 10 years. RD noted that such data for NCC should be available from Norfolk's Housing Monitoring Report. RG concluded that this approach would provide links with the LAA work and improve consistency. Data from MPAs on housing completions against targets was therefore invited.</p> <p>JS referred to Appendix 6 (<i>'Applications permitted, refused, withdrawn or undetermined'</i>) and raised the suggestion that applications should only be included which affected reserves or capacity. This would reduce the current unwieldy list of applications that affected neither. K H-H commented that this should include applications which seek to extend the life of a site. MP commented that where an application is undetermined it should say so or be deleted. MN would generally welcome</p>	<p>JS</p> <p>JS</p> <p>MPAs</p>
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	<p>the knowledge in this area but key issue is continued downward trend. MN felt Table 2 generally reflects the national position with 2015 having been sluggish with plant mothballed but picked up over 2016 and complimented the AMR as a document that read well as echoed by others. It was queried whether the A14/A1 improvements should be included for Cambs & Peterborough. <i>[Post mtg AB confirmed that work started on the construction of site compounds & enabling works Autumn 2016 with main construction works starting late 2016 on improvements to the existing A1 from Alconbury to Brampton Hut, followed by commencement of the A14 works in early 2017 – Draft AMR would be amended accordingly].</i></p> <p>RG asked for any further comments to be provided to SM by the end of June to enable the AMR to be formally submitted.</p>	<p>AB</p> <p>ALL</p>
4	POS Practice Guidance on the Production & Use of LAAs (May 2017)	RG/ALL
	<p>This 'living document' had been circulated ahead of the meeting and generally welcomed although RR questioned how production capacity is to be considered as the document doesn't recognise that at all. MN agreed that production capacity is becoming an increasingly important topic given the major nationally significant infrastructure projects coming forward at the same time which presents a real problem with product not being able to be churned out quickly enough. MN would raise this concern with David Payne who is leading on this for the MPA.</p> <p>Noted that this was indicative of minimum capacity, not maximum. Considered advisable to use best available information e.g. data in planning permissions / knowledge of what the plant is producing as it was acknowledged that commercial decisions over production levels will change over time.</p> <p>KH-H noted the key question is whether there is enough production capacity to meet demand. It was generally felt that supply audits are needed for major infrastructure projects to ensure sufficient reserves and capacity to deliver projects on time as is currently the case for road schemes.</p> <p>RG noted that Somerset's LAA is going for a 10 year average but have Hinckley Point under construction and questioned whether the Group should respond regarding an absence of information on production capacity. KB queried where the material is coming from as it may not be from Somerset. If capacity doesn't exist to supply other areas of the country, there could be a real issue. Agreed that SEM would respond seeking assurance that production capacity issues have been taken into account. Noted that Sizewell B has not yet got pp</p>	<p>MN</p> <p>SEM</p>

	<p>but potentially could be similar issues for the EEAWP. MN had some further points and would pass these to SEM by 23 June. He noted a potential threat arising in relation to East Midlands quarries which he understood to be operating at maximum capacity and would contact the East Mids AWP Secretariat to ensure the EEAWP can comment on their LAAs.</p> <p>Some discussion on how Brexit may factor into LAA e.g. through impact on tariffs, but concluded all unknown at this stage. MN would forward to SEM a copy of SWAWP's response to Somerset's LAA which hints at relationships between counties.</p> <p>RR referred to the annual programme set out at Section 9.2 specifically in relation to the timing of the LAA and questioned whether the AMR would include the LAA. He noted that the LAA was published at the end of last year and queried whether this was a reference to last year's version. MN would raise with DP. RR was not proposing to include LAAs from all other EE authorities. RG had interpreted this as including information from LAAs. Agreed that AMR should be published and then look at this for next year with all committed to use this as far as possible, but felt EEAWP generally follows the suggested timetable at 9.1.</p>	<p>MN</p> <p>MN</p> <p>MN</p> <p>MN</p>
5	MPA Update	MN
	<p>MN made reference to the latest long-term aggregates demand and supply scenarios (2016-30) issued by the MPA which had been circulated prior to the meeting along with the accompanying press release. It indicated a generally positive outlook with volumes continuing an upward trend with the exception of asphalt which remained flat. The recent election was not thought to affect the outlook.</p> <p>Feedback from the RTPI/MPA Mineral Planning Conference had been positive.</p> <p>MPA remained concerned by the continuing lack of the National Coordinating Group and the MPA's Chief Executive would be sending a missive to the Minister.</p> <p>RR suggested it would be beneficial for the projections to extend beyond 2030 to 2035 thereby tying in with the 15 yr life of adopted local plans. Otherwise, however, it is a well balanced document containing information which no-one else is compiling. Concerns remain over a lack of data and discussion as to whether the Group should voice its concerns with DCLG but generally felt to be more of an issue for authorities than industry given the system favours developers if plans don't come forward. Potentially a brief could be agreed at</p>	

	national level - even if DCLG are not represented – as important to be seen as independent.	
6	National Coordinating Group feedback	SEM
	SEM confirmed that there was no NCG feedback to report but noted that the lack of a NCG meeting arose at the meeting of AWP Secretaries that took place last October. Richard Read had been tasked by the SEAWP with setting up a meeting in the 2 nd week in October and currently assessing room availability and costs at potential venues in London, Birmingham and Manchester. Ideally the meeting would be joined by a DCLG rep.	
7	National Planning Issues	EM/SEM
	<p>SEM confirmed that EM had since June remained seconded to his role in local plan interventions team with focus firmly on housing delivery. EM had therefore handed back his responsibilities for minerals and land stability etc but unclear who had taken on this role.</p> <p>Money for the AWP Secretariat had been secured for 2017/18 with a 6 monthly invoice invited by DCLG to be submitted in October to cover the period April – September 2017.</p> <p>MN highlighted that the Nottinghamshire Draft Minerals Local Plan had been pulled 2 weeks before its Examination was due. More recently available data showed a lower than anticipated demand for aggregates and the Council took the view that if the needs assessment for the plan was based on more up to date figures, the level of need would differ with potentially fewer sites required over the plan period. The veracity of the evidence base had been raised in objections. MN would circulate the report by the Chief Exec which does outline the risks of having no plan in place. Noted that county elections had taken place in May.</p>	MN
7	Local Plans update	MPAs/ All
	<p>An update had been circulated prior to the meeting using the previously agreed template and was noted.</p> <p>In response to a question RD confirmed that the call for sites exercise in Norfolk is due to commence on 26 June for 6 weeks.</p>	
8	AOB	All
	RR referred to a mtg attended by several authorities which have industrial sand resources with a view to establishing a national group, which BGS and the minerals industry would be invited to sit on, given Govt appears to have abandoned any	

	<p>plans to look at this nationally important mineral resource, noting blank columns within the Minerals Yearbook. Rob Thain (W. Sussex) is writing to industry to gauge support for attending. RR felt this was important for local authorities from a duty to cooperate perspective and increased knowledge of the different qualities of such resources and the markets they serve should lead to better informed plans.</p> <p>With respect to safeguarding, TC-L queried RH's progress on the study into wharf capacity. GG offered to raise this with James Cutting. SEM also agreed to contact RH to check progress from his point of view.</p>	<p>GG SEM</p>
9	Date of Next Meetings	Chair
	<p>18 Oct 2017; 7 Feb 2018 all at 14:00 hrs, Essex CC. LAAs should be circulated by end of Sept for discussion at the Oct 2017 mtg.</p>	All