

DRAFT MINUTES

East of England Aggregates Working Party

Meeting on 13 June 2019 starting at 1400

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

ATTENDEES

Members	
Richard Greaves (RG)	Essex County Council (Chairman)
Gemma Bright (GB)	Essex County Council
Phil Dash (PD)	Essex County Council
Chris Stanek (CS)	Peterborough City Council
Richard Drake (RD)	Norfolk County Council
Graham Gunby (GG)	Suffolk County Council
Kirsten Hannaford-Hill (KH-H)	Aggregate Industries / MPA
Mark North (MN)	MPA
Peter Larwood (PL)	Frimstone Ltd / BAA
Alan Everard (AE)	Tarmac / MPA
Others	
Jerry Smith (JS)	EEAWP Secretariat
Dee Walker (DW)	EEAWP Secretariat
Apologies	
Roy Romans (RR)	Bedfordshire Authorities
Angela Watts (AW)	Brett / MPA
Trefor Evans (TE)	British Aggregates Association
Ann Barnes (AB)	Cambridgeshire County Council
Emma Fitch (EF)	Cambridgeshire County Council
Emma Chapman (EC)	Hertfordshire County Council
Shaun Denny (SD)	Cemex / MPA
Mark Page (MP)	Hanson / MPA
Julie Greaves (JG)	Hertfordshire County Council
Amy Balding (AB1)	Marine Management Organisation
Richard Read (RR1)	SEEAWP / LAWP
Mike Hurley (MH)	Sibelco / MPA
Richard Hatter (RH)	Thurrock Borough Council

Item No	Subject	Owner
1	Welcome, Introductions & Apologies	RG
	<p>RG welcomes everyone to the Group and introductions were made for the benefit of new attendees.</p> <p>Apologies are as set out on previous sheet.</p> <p>JS commented that Eleanor Johnson of the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) had confirmed her acceptance of another role at the MMO and that AB would remain on the circulation pending appointment of a replacement.</p>	
2	Minutes of the last meeting & Matters arising	RG / JS
	<p>WHARF CAPACITY STUDY</p> <p>RG reminded the Group that Essex CC had some involvement regarding wharf capacity following the Inspector imposing a monitoring indicator on the Plan requiring the Council to do something if 90% of capacity was exceeded notwithstanding there are no wharfs in Essex.</p> <p>STATEMENTS OF COMMON GROUND (SoCG)</p> <p>MN had written to Carolyn Williams (CW) regarding the thinking of other AWP's, but no response received prior to CW moving on. Some concern was voiced on behalf of the industry as to its involvement in SoCG as part of an AWP. MN suggested a work-around may be to append the relevant minutes of the AWP to say so or the industry simply doesn't get involved being a matter for MPA. CS asked whether the industry could agree to <i>Matter 1 in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough's Draft SoCG</i> (see item 6)</p> <p>SIZEWELL</p> <p>This item has not been discussed at the previous meeting due to no representative from Suffolk CC being present. GG was concerned with associated mineral transport issues and understood that scope to use rail appeared limited due to the difficulty in getting slots and the need for rail improvements. Road was being promoted as an alternative, but GG expressed concern for this least favoured solution which would involve some 1500 movements / day bringing material in from the Mendips and questioned whether there were even enough drivers to service that option. AE queried whether there was scope to rail material into Ipswich and road to account for the final leg, but GG underlined that slots on the rail network is the problem. He commented that it was looking like 2 trains / day rather than the 5 trains / day maximum but that a 'pop up' depot would be needed off the network. Still uncertainty surrounding that given potential for windfall sites / depots. GG reported that there's 50% headroom in Suffolk CC's Plan, so the authority is ready for it but no specifics as to where the material may come from although Cambs, Lincs, Essex and Norfolk are likely sources. Lowestoft Wharf may be refitted but many unknowns surround the project. GG reported that the DCO is being worked up for next consultation stage.</p> <p>GG queried why marine aggregate could not be used. MN understood that the design precluded marine sand and gravel albeit it was being used at Hinkley. AE suggested this could reflect the fact that limestone offered greater performance in terms of fire resistance. GG identified other key issues associated with the project, notably its countryside location impacting on both a SSSI and an AONB.</p> <p>RG concluded that the EEAWP needed to keep abreast of progress and advised that Mark Woodger was monitoring the situation here and at Bradwell B on behalf of Essex CC. MN reiterated his view that projects such as these should be accompanied by a materials supply</p>	

	<p>audit. GG commented that whilst there is an idea of quantity, information on sources was lacking and that such a project would also generate significant quantities of C, D & E waste.</p> <p>Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record.</p>	
3	Consideration of Draft Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)	ALL
	<p>A draft version of the AMR for 2018 had been circulated to the Group in advance of the meeting. AE commented that the 3-year average was becoming increasingly interesting and suggested that the AMR take more account of the 3-year average, not just the 10-year average. Added reference could also be made to the replenishment rate highlighting this as a long-term issue and that the year on year falls presented an issue for all.</p> <p>It was noted that landbanks for some MPAs had dipped below the 7-year NPPF threshold, but this was only the case where calculated on the sub-regional apportionment figures. Calculated using 10-year average sales indicated that all MPAs could demonstrate landbanks in excess of 7-years. KH-H highlighted the importance of overall production capacity noting the danger where this is confined to just a handful of sites.</p> <p>GG noted the reference to the sub-regional apportionment commenting that such figures were nearly out of time versus the 10-year sales approach and highlighted that this makes a difference in the terms of sites needed. In Suffolk, GG commented that housing completion rates are a third down. The Group agreed that the opportunity should again be taken to request updated guidelines, although it was mentioned that there is some Government movement on new guidelines (see item 9). MN also highlighted that the industry was experiencing different aspirations from landowners becoming more resistant to water-based restoration schemes preferring instead to see sites revert to agricultural land and the hope value that may bring for future housing / solar farms etc. Overall the draft AMR was welcomed.</p> <p>It was agreed that a final AMR draft would be circulated in 2-weeks for final comments prior to submission in early July 2019.</p>	JS
4	Draft Suffolk LAA (2018 Data)	GG
	<p>GG introduced the draft document, which had been circulated to the Group in advance of the meeting. Figures were reported as being broadly similar to previous years although the document had been modernised by including more commentary on major projects (e.g. Sizewell C) given the additional demand these may impose. Whilst the sources to supply Sizewell remained unclear, GG reported that the Plan had some flexibility allowing other sites, including wharves and railheads, to come forward. Sand and gravel were identified as being key for Suffolk with marine aggregate considered less important. Levels of recycling were significant with GG highlighting the 60,000tpa of bottom ash from the Great Blakenham EfW facility.</p> <p>In response to a point raised by RG on behalf of RR as to the timing of the LAA (i.e. ahead of publishing the AMR), GG accepted it was an early LAA draft but explained that this was influenced by the Examination of Suffolk CCs Minerals & Waste Local Plan taking place next week and added that the Plan was headed in a broadly similar direction.</p> <p>MN understood the difficulties but noted the reliance on a 10-year average and suggested it was not overly clear whether this read as a monitoring report or a forecast. GG accepted that the 10-year average had been taken as the baseline but felt that other factors were recognised e.g. housing could suddenly pick up and Sizewell was the great unknown. GG indicated that</p>	

	<p>the Plan has 50% more than the current housing delivery plus the flexibility to increase production. It was suggested that para 2.1 (Introduction) should add reference to the 3-year average as included in the Summary Table (Executive Summary).</p> <p>The Group generally felt it's a reasonable approach to use 10-year sales as a starting point and then build in flexibility (e.g. 10%) which would provide consistency with the Group's response to Herts CC. MN acknowledged that the position regarding Sizewell is unknown and housing delivery is below the number planned but in the absence of details, the Plan has 31% headroom and flexibility.</p> <p>GG agreed to tweak the document and recirculate it with the above comments reflected as tracked changes.</p> <p>MN suggested that this include para 8.5 to confirm that 10-years is taken as the starting point and draw forecasting out but noting that the Plan, providing 31% headroom if needed, is reasonable.</p>	GG
5	Draft Norfolk LAA (2018 Data)	RD
	<p>RD introduced the Draft Norfolk LAA which had been previously circulated and confirmed he was only keen to invite comments in respect of minerals data as the intention was to bring the LAA as a whole back to the Group at its Autumn meeting. Norfolk CC proposes to continue using a 20-year average on the basis that this includes sufficient flexibility and avoids a 10-year spell impacted by the last recession. RD argued that a 20-year period ensures both the ups and downs are represented and produces a 20-year average of 1.87Mt.</p> <p>CS noted that this approach represented an uplift of 18% on the 3-year average figure. In response, RD suggested that Norfolk CCs approach provides flexibility derived from using an average of actual production rather than adding a 10% uplift. In response to a question, RD confirmed that Norfolk takes virtually zero marine aggregate. CS advised that Cambs & Peterborough opted to take the difference between the 3 and 10-year averages and queried the justification behind using the 20-year figure. RD felt the picture was skewed by a 10-year timeframe which, in turn, skews a 15-year plan. MN observed that, providing there is a logic to an argument or process, such an approach can be supportable in the absence of a central methodology.</p> <p>Comment was made that it would be interesting to check how the average compares with the figure in the Draft AMR to ascertain whether there was any impact on adjoining MPAs.</p> <p>RD confirmed that Norfolk CC is making allocations based on the 1.87Mt 20-year average figure. This involved selecting the most appropriate sites from the available possible sites put forward. Table 7 of the Draft LAA and accompanying text sets out the 'Status of sand and gravel site allocations' identifying which have since received planning permission. The Group recognised that the methodologies varied across the East of England but noted that the AWP could not dictate as a result of withering guidelines. RD highlighted that Norfolk CC had used this approach last year. The Group noted the proposed approach of Norfolk CC.</p>	
6	Cambs & Peterborough Draft Statement of Common Ground	CS
	<p>CS referred to the above document previously circulated to the Group and identified the following Key Strategic Matters as set out in the Draft SoCG:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Provision of Minerals; 2. The Provision of Waste Management Facilities; 	

	<p>3. Safeguarding Key Infrastructure; and 4. Construction and Growth.</p> <p>and asked whether the Group would agree to these matters (notably Matters 1, 3 & 4) on a broad level. MN felt it was difficult to object to the comments drawing a parallel with SEEAWPs position with Kent’s SoCG.</p> <p>The Group raised no concerns regarding Matters 1, 3 & 4 and concluded that it could offer support to all 3 statements. Whilst the Group noted that the document was not specific in terms of the provision of housing etc, it was recognised that individual arguments could be developed at Independent Examination.</p> <p>It was suggested that the date of the EEAWP meeting be entered in the table at Appendix of the Draft SoCG.</p>	CS
7	Worcestershire CC Response Document (Minerals LP 4th Stage Consultation) & Proposed Site Selection Methodology	ALL
	<p>JS drew attention to the recent publication by Worcestershire CC of its response to the 4th stage consultation on its draft Minerals Local Plan (MLP) and Proposed Site Selection Methodology as previously circulated – see www.worcestershire.gov.uk/minerals. A Publication Version of the MLP would be considered by Worcestershire CCs Cabinet in June 2019 and Full Council in July 2019. It was felt that it wasn’t of relevance to the Group as a whole but could be accessed by individual members as they saw fit.</p>	ALL
8	MPA Update	MN
	<p>MN drew attention to various press releases and reports which has previously been circulated to the Group. These included ‘<i>The Contribution of Recycled & Secondary Materials to Total Aggregates Supply in Great Britain</i>’. MN also referred to the following economic & market outlook update, which had also been circulated to the Group prior to the meeting:</p> <p>ECONOMIC & MARKET OUTLOOK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPA MARKET FORECAST UPDATE. After a year of subdued market growth in 2018, construction demand for mineral products, including aggregates (crushed rock and sand & gravel), asphalt, ready-mixed concrete (RMC) and mortar, weakened at the start of 2019 as general construction activity continued to slow. The outlook for the rest of 2019 remains weak but slow growth is expected to resume from 2020, as construction markets are boosted by an acceleration in major infrastructure projects. As a result, by 2021, aggregates sales volumes are forecast to be 4% higher than in 2018, underpinned by 7% growth in mortar sales, 3% for asphalt and 2% for RMC. • ECONOMIC OUTLOOK. The ONS confirmed that the UK economy grew 0.5% in the first quarter of 2019 compared to the previous quarter, having previously slowed to 0.2% in the last quarter of 2018. Faster growth early this year is likely to be temporary, stemming from stockpiling and the build-up of inventories in the run up to the initial Brexit date 29 March and is unlikely to continue into the rest of the year. Economic forecasters do not expect this relatively fast growth to continue and the UK economy should remain muted for the rest of 2019. Average new forecasts for UK GDP currently show modest growth of 1.4% in 2019 and 1.5% in 2020, mainly based on the assumption of a smooth transition to new trading arrangements post-Brexit. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CONSTRUCTION. Construction output in the first quarter of the year grew 1.0% compared to the previous quarter. Growth in this period was driven by repair & maintenance work, with some increases in infrastructure output in 2019Q1, however this was offset by a sharp decline in commercial activity. Overall, new work remained weak, growing just 0.1% compared to the previous quarter. In their latest forecast (Spring 2019), the Construction Products Association (CPA) expects this weakness to continue, with a small decline in construction activity this year (-0.4%), followed by a slow return to growth from 2020, driven by circa 9% growth per annum in new infrastructure work over 2019-21. 	
9	National Planning Issues	MN/JS
	<p>MN highlighted that Lonek Wojtulewicz (LW) who would be known to many as former Chair of the East Midlands AWP and had some 8mths ago been appointed as the Ministry's Broker for Shale Gas, was leading the Planning Infrastructure Division for Minerals and Waste Planning. The MPA had met with LW and understands he is considering options to review national guidelines. He is also identifying money in the budget to re-establish the national survey and, if money can be found, is keen for the Minerals Fact Sheets to be reviewed in conjunction with BGS.</p> <p>JS confirmed that he had been contacted by Sara Lewis (SL) at MHCLG who had taken over from Vicky Engelke who had moved into Neighbourhood Planning & Local Plans. SL would be managing the AWP contracts and procurement under LWs lead with agreement already in place to fund the AWP contracts for a further year. SL is keen to call a meeting of the AWP Secretariats at a venue in Birmingham in July 2019. JS advised that the invite may include AWP Chairs, but this had yet to be confirmed depending on the final agenda.</p> <p>JS suggested that these appointments would see a more proactive approach from MHCLG than had been the case for some time which the Group saw as positive. SL had already announced her intention to ensure that MHCLG has available a full set of Annual Monitoring Reports from the various AWP's in line with contractual obligations and JS had been asked to complete a table setting out the key dates from the production and submission of the Annual Monitoring Report for 2018.</p>	JS
10	Minerals Local Plan Update	MPAs / ALL
	An update was circulated prior to the meeting using the agreed template and was noted.	
11	Any Other Business	ALL
	<p>It was noted that at the next meeting the Group would be discussing draft Local Aggregate Assessments and MPAs should ensure these are ready for circulation in late September 2019 in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>DW distributed copies of '<i>Marine Aggregate Dredging 1998 – 2018: A 20-year review</i>' prepared by The Crown Estate and the MPA</p>	MPAs
12	Dates of Next Meetings	RG
	<p>The dates for the meetings were confirmed as:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">7 November 2019 and 6 February 2020 at 1400hrs</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Venue: Essex County Council, County Hall, Market Square, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH</p> <p>Further dates will be agreed at the next meeting.</p>	ALL TO NOTE