

AGREED MINUTES

East of England Aggregates Working Party

Meeting on 21 September 2020 starting at 1400

Venue: Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams

ATTENDEES

Members	
Richard Greaves (RG)	Essex County Council (Chairman)
Phil Dash (PD)	Essex County Council
Emma Chapman (EC)	Hertfordshire County Council
Graham Gunby (GG)	Suffolk County Council
Chris Stanek (CS)	Hertfordshire County Council
Richard Drake (RD)	Norfolk County Council
Roy Romans (RR)	Bedfordshire Authorities
Claire Victory (CV)	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
David Payne (DP)	MPA
Georgie Sutton (GS)	Marine Management Organisation
Mark Page (MP)	Hansons
Kirsten Hannaford-Hill (KHH)	Aggregate Industries / MPA
Peter Huxtable (PH)	BAA
Angela Watts (AW)	Brett Aggregates
Mark Kelly (MK)	Cemex/MPA
Nick Everington (NE)	The Crown Estate
Others	
Jerry Smith (JS)	EEAWP Secretariat
Dee Walker (DW)	EEAWP Secretariat
Apologies	
Emma Fitch (EF)	Cambridgeshire County Council
Caroline Jeffery (CJ)	Norfolk County Council
Lonek Wojtulewicz (LW)	MHCLG
Peter Lemon (PL)	Middags
Mark North (MN)	MPA
Alan Everard (AE)	Tarmac / MPA
Simon Smith (SS)	Longwater Gravel

Item No	Subject	Owner
1	<p>Welcome, Introductions & Apologies</p> <p>RG welcomed everyone to this virtual group meeting via Microsoft Teams. RG suggested and it was agreed that when members want to speak, they should indicate by the 'raise hand' function to avoid everyone speaking all at once. It was also advisable for members to remain on 'mute' until such time they wish to speak.</p> <p>RG provided introductions for the benefit of new and guest attendees. It was noted that CS had joined Hertfordshire CC but would also be speaking on behalf of Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire CC.</p> <p>Apologies are as set out on previous sheet.</p>	RG / JS
2	<p>Minutes of the last meeting & Matters arising</p> <p>JS had circulated a draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the group. RG commented that a prior Officer discussion took place regarding paragraph 9 and it was felt that this should be re-worded to remove the voting implication, but the matter is on the Agenda.</p> <p>JS drew attention to an update from EF regarding the Environment Agency's Great Ouse Flood Storage & Flow Conveyance Study in which it was reported that both EF and MN had attended a meeting of the stakeholders' group on 14 July 2020 on behalf of the AWP. Concerns were raised in relation to the strategic vision and deliverability of the project but the draft terms of reference for the group was discussed and consideration of minerals will be built into the work package.</p> <p>Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record.</p>	RG / JS
3	<p>National Planning Issues including AM2019 & Secretariat Contracts</p> <p>National Aggregate Minerals Survey 2019 (AM19): JS reported that he, RG and MN had attended a virtual meeting of the AM19 Steering Group on 9 September 2020 at which BGS gave an update on progress: <u>Form A (Operator Returns):</u> BGS reported that the links and guidance had been quickly distributed to operators ahead of the 27 July start date. The deadline for returns was 21 September 2020. BGS reported that, as at 9 September, there had been a very low response (18%) although several major operators had been contacted and were planning returns ahead of the deadline date. BGS has noted some anomalies (e.g. multiple entries for the same site or site details entered with no sales data) which BGS is following up between September and November. A slide showing the national picture of returns suggested none had been received from operators within Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk with similar gaps elsewhere in the country. BGS subsequently sent all AWP Secretaries the text for a reminder email (including the links and guidance) to be passed on to MPAs for distribution to the operators. This was distributed to MPAs in the East of England on 10 September. BGS and MHCLG agreed to notify operators that the deadline had now passed but that returns can still be accepted in an attempt to achieve a higher return rate, although it is hoped that the deadline will have seen a flurry of last minute submissions. The programme envisaged BGS having collated data by 9 November but that is now seen as very ambitious with publishing of outcomes not now expected until after January 2021 which provides some justification for the EEAWP conducting its parallel survey.</p>	RG/ JS / DP

	<p>Form B (Mineral Planning Authority Returns): These involved returns on MHCLG’s DELTA system regarding planning applications received since the last national survey. The deadline was 7 September 2020 but this was extended a week. The response rate then increased from 30% to over 60% in the run up to the original deadline. JS reported that BGS’s slide of the national picture suggested that, amongst the East of England MPAs, no returns had been received from Norfolk or Hertfordshire. JS had followed this up and CJ reported Norfolk’s returns had been made whilst EC was planning to submit by the extended deadline. This was relayed to MHCLG and it confirmed that there had been a delay in submitted data pulling through to BGS. It was noted that all MPAs in the East of England had submitted their data.</p> <p>RG added that a further meeting of the AM19 Steering Group is planned for November with a final one to be held in January prior to publication.</p> <p>MP advised that Hanson’s had started the process the week earlier, but submission was now completed. He reported that the new digital system seems to operate well but had experienced issues with submitting the data on the platform - he had hoped it would generate a pdf against which he could ‘sense check’ inputted data but the system does not allow one to do so. JS agreed to feed this back to MHCLG. EC advised that they encountered uploading issues and her advice to others would be to log back on and check that their own submissions had uploaded correctly. JS reinforced this advising all to double check.</p> <p>CS suggested that it would be ideal if a pdf receipt of submission could be released, CS advised that a screenshot of Peterborough City Council’s return was taken to confirm submission.</p> <p>AWP Secretariat Contracts: JS reminded the Group that the current contracts had previously been extended until the end of September 2020 but MHCLG had recently notified AWP Secretaries of its intention to have these extended again until end of March 2021. MHCLG had intended to enter into a full procurement process but resources and priorities have not made that possible but that will now be the aim at the end of the extended period. Variation to contract forms are expected shortly. CBC had previously indicated that it would not be tendering for the renewal of contracts but, given an Annual Monitoring Report is not being prepared this year and the desire to provide continuity with the AM19 survey, CBC have agreed they are happy to continue providing support until then.</p>	<p>JS</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Consideration of Draft LAAs</p>	<p>All</p>
	<p>Apologies were noted from the Bedfordshire Authorities as its Draft LAA was only circulated on the morning of this meeting. It was noted that LAA’s were due within the next few weeks from Norfolk CC & Suffolk CC. It was suggested that these be circulated within 4 weeks with a further 2 weeks for comments whilst drafts circulated ahead of the meeting be finalised within 2 weeks for circulation with members given a couple of weeks to submit any comments/questions to the relevant authority.</p> <p>The authorities then presented the summary of their LAA:</p> <p>HERTS COUNTY COUNCIL EC commented that no new sand & gravel sites had been approved or applications submitted in 2019. Taken one site out (Pynesfield) on account of HS2 so left with 8 sites.</p>	<p>JS</p>

<p>A slight increase in sales to 1.25Mt was reported (up from 1.21 Mt in 2018) representing the largest sales figure since 2011 but reserves are lower, falling to 8.95Mt.</p> <p>In terms of landbank figures, EC reported this equated to 6.4 years (based on the apportionment figure); 7.5 years (using the 10 yr average) and 7.4 years (using the 3 yr average). Whilst the apportionment figure produces a landbank below the required 7 year threshold set out in the NPPF, EC highlighted a number of undetermined applications which potentially could add additional reserves of some 12Mt to the totals.</p> <p>RR made a general observation that the East of England MPAs had previously agreed to adopt the same Dashboard Summary format for consistency and the one used by the Bedfordshire Authorities had previously been circulated. It was suggested that the Dashboard Summary for the draft Herts LAA includes a line for the figure remaining in allocated sites as part of the headline figures, although DP commented that this would need to ensure that unpermitted reserves are not counted as part of landbank reserves.</p> <p>BEDFORDSHIRE AUTHORITIES</p> <p>RR ran through the ‘Dashboard Summary’ as set out within their draft LAA. This indicated sales as being slightly up with permitted reserves also up on account of the granting of a couple of planning permissions over 2019. Sales showed that 92% of the apportionment figure was being met.</p> <p>In landbank terms this translated to 8.8 years (applying the apportionment figure), 11.3 years (based on 10 year average sales); and 9.7 years (using the 3 year average sales figure). Further reserves are identified in the remaining allocated sites within the local plan, but have yet to be determined.</p> <p>CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH</p> <p>CS ran through the ‘Executive Summary Dashboard for Sand & Gravel’ as set out within their draft LAA. This referred to sales of 3.42Mt in 2019, an increase of 0.22 Mt from the previous year. Permitted sand and gravel reserves fell to 39.17Mt. The sand and gravel landbank stands at 13 years (based on the apportionment figure of 3mtpa), 15.7 years (based on 10 years sales average) and 11.4 years (using the 3 years sales average). The local plan identifies 7 allocated sites giving a potential yield of 21.9Mt.</p> <p>With regards to crushed rock, a final return from an operator is awaited before finalising this element, although based on an estimate indicated a 10.7 year landbank. No figures for secondary / recycled aggregates were available. Road planings, at 76,500 tonnes, are 22,000 tonnes lower than last year.</p> <p>GREATER ESSEX AUTHORITIES</p> <p>Had a 92% rate of response.</p> <p>PD ran through the ‘2019 Headline Figures’ as set out within their draft LAA. Sand and gravel sales stood at 3.17Mt whilst permitted reserves totalled 33.1Mt. The landbank based on the apportionment figure increased to 7.44 years thereby exceeding the threshold but this rises to 10.14 years when applying the 10 year sales average.</p> <p>Imports of crushed rock in 2019 rose substantially representing a 43% increase over the previous year.</p>	<p>MPAs</p> <p>EC</p>
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	<p>In response to a question, it was reiterated that it was not proposed to combine the figures from respective LAAs this year on account of the AM19. JS commented that there had been gaps in responses possibly due to Covid-19 and staff being furloughed and potentially with operators concentrating on the AM19 returns, notwithstanding that the data should be the same.</p> <p>It was queried why local surveys are being conducting if they do not to be combined. JS confirmed that the main reason, as agreed by the group earlier in the year, is due to the likelihood of a delay in the release of AM19 data and undertaking a local surveys enables at least enables MPAs to proceed with their LAAs and assist in development management decisions. It was agreed that no AMR is to be produced this year due to BGS's AM19 project nationally. It was noted that different draft LAAs had used different methodologies although it was considered that this is not necessarily a problem provided each LAA is clear as to how it is been compiled.</p> <p>RG asked for members to send any comments on the LAAs directly to the relevant mineral planning authority within the next 2 weeks.</p>	ALL
5	Planning White Paper: 'Planning for the Future' Consultation	All
	<p>A link to the Planning White Paper (PWP) consultation had previously been circulated.</p> <p>RG noted the lack of reference to minerals planning within the document. DP advised that the MPA and BAA had held discussions with LW and Michael Bingham, Senior Policy Advisor at MHCLG concerning the lack of reference to minerals planning and how that is seen as fitting in. MHCLG is seeking the sector's ideas on what's needed to reform the mineral planning system. LW will be key to further discussions and should be copied in to any response from the group reminding MHCLG to not forget minerals planning. It was accepted that the existing system takes a long time for plans to get adopted and has complexities but is it the system or resources that is the problem? DP explained the discussion with MHCLG had sought to underline the need to reinstate the components that made the Managed Aggregate Supply System (MASS) work. DP suggested that the PWP's references to zoning had some parallels with the minerals system in as afar as the role played by geology and the identification of preferred areas offering some level of certainty within such zones. DP felt the PWP should not underplay the importance of democracy and the role of politicians in the planning process. It is important that the Growth areas referred to in the PWP don't ignore safeguarding and Renewal areas recognise the need to safeguard associated infrastructure in the form of wharfs, manufacturing plants and rail depots.</p> <p>RG suggested transitional arrangements would also need to be set out in moving from one system to another. RR felt the PWP contained some good ideas, such as reducing the amount of information required in local plans, but felt there was a danger in placing more reliance on the Forward Planning process as this requires more details at the Forward Plan stage, not at the application stage. Who collects the detail, more detail takes longer? RR questioned whether developers should be putting all information in up front. It will be the public consultations that are dropped to reduce time but this impacts upon democracy. Recognised it takes time to respond to every issue and the plan process would be speeded up by focussing on strategic issues. The AWP should comment that the PWP is about Housing and highlight the absence of reference to minerals, waste and infrastructure but these need to be brought forward with Housing.</p>	

	<p>PD questioned how a system could enable all information to be in up front and agreed with what RR had said. When it comes to resource safeguarding issue, it's a concern at county level whereas at district council level there would be more concern with the delivery of development. CS commented that the ability to designate Growth zones, Renewal zones and Protected zones suggested they would be more aimed at local plans whereas mineral local plans are more strategic. RG noted outline applications would be required in Growth zones whilst full applications would be required in Protected zones. A concern would be if the prior extraction of minerals could be undertaken without the need for planning permission should a housing development come forward in a Growth area.</p> <p>PH noted that, with references to a presumption in favour of development for uses identified as suitable in specific areas, whether there was a danger of the NPPF being revisited. He highlighted the fact that no other representative from MHCLG covers LW when he is unable to attend the AWP but important to keep making the messages. RG advised that LW has attended a number of meetings and it has been positive him being in post.</p> <p>Thoughts turned to what a reformed mineral planning system looks like and RG asked what is needed to get the system right suggesting a desire for it to be easier with a robust MASS system including National Guidelines in place. Can we complete the local plan process within 30-months as suggested? The Group recognised the importance of submitting a response as an AWP highlighting the importance of not destroying those aspects which work whilst recognising that where development management policies are set out in the NPPF, do they need to be written in locally? Such streamlining of policy should be welcomed although recognised that local plans need to reflect local circumstances. RD commented that discussions in Norfolk supported national model policies so LPA's don't spend time 'reinventing the wheel' rather than having multiple policies dealing with the same issues (e.g. climate change) and this would save time. RR agreed you could have national policies to a point, but noted that an advantage of local plans is that they can pick up on new issues and questioned whether national policies could build in regular reviews to do so, particularly with a resistance to increase the wording in the NPPF. The ability to have some relevance to local areas and reflect local circumstances is still needed. It appeared that the MPAs' views are not far from the industries thoughts on the PWP.</p> <p>RG suggested that a draft response be started by a sub-AWP group to send the message that minerals planning should not be forgotten about and how it would work in any new system. It was noted that AWP's would take on a greater strategic importance if the Duty to Cooperate was to be abolished. RR suggested starting with the comments the AWP made on the last NPPF response regarding the essential aspects of minerals planning. RG/JS to prepare a draft response for circulation.</p>	<p>RG/JS</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>EoEAWP Terms of Reference</p>	<p>RG / JS</p>
	<p>A draft revised Terms of Reference for the Group had previously been circulated. RG highlighted the new section 9 with regards to Statements of Common Ground (SoCG). Section 11 had also been amended to increase the period of Chairmanship although it was suggested that this be further increased to 3 years to coincide with the duration of AWP contracts. GS asked if the SoCG would be circulated prior to a meeting that it would then be agreed at? JS advised that the intention would be that it is circulated in advance, with the suggested voting rights restricted to MPAs to avoid difficulties for industry. RR advised that the meeting could consider the document & suggest amendments be made that the AWP would otherwise be content with. These may then need to be taken back to the LPA unless agreement can be made at the meeting. PD asked if it is just the MPAs making a decision, if</p>	

	<p>just them voting is that not only part of the AWP? DP advised that SEEAWP has considered a number and SWAWP has a protocol of how to deal with SoCG. They append the minutes of the AWP meeting to detail the disagreements & discussions undertaken. In practice this overcomes any deadlock. RG remained uncomfortable with the Section 9 voting rights. CS reminded the Group that Cambs & Peterborough brought a SoCG last year which was dealt with in its entirety and read from para 3.12 that the AWP would address matters in the SoCG in broad, sub-regional terms leaving individual LPA's to make comments on bi-lateral issues of a strategic nature. RG suggested what CS read from their response would be appropriate. GS was supportive of wording from CS. Any discussions could similarly be appended to minutes of the group's meeting.</p> <p>JS to liaise with CS & section 9 will be re-drafted and be recirculated.</p>	CS / JS
7	MPA Update	DP
	<p>DP referred to the following economic & market outlook update, which had also been circulated to the Group prior to the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPA MARKET UPDATE. In the first half of 2020, sales volumes for aggregates, ready-mixed concrete and asphalt declined by between 19% and 27%, whilst mortar sales volumes are 37% lower than in the first half of last year. Prospects for construction and MPA markets for the remainder of this year are weak, with higher unemployment and weak consumer confidence impacting heavily on private housebuilding and commercial work. Construction activity is expected to rebound more decisively from 2021 (+18%), supported by major infrastructure projects, including HS2 and the five-year investment programmes within regulated sectors in roads, rail and water & sewerage. • ECONOMIC & CONSTRUCTION OUTLOOK. The UK economy is on course for a sharp bounce back during the third quarter of the year, but after that, the trajectory for growth is harder to predict, depending on the path for consumer spending in the light of rising unemployment, the continued impact of social distancing measures and the possibility of a second wave of Covid-19 cases. The Bank of England estimates that GDP will only return to pre-Covid levels at the end of 2021. <p>Construction output also saw a record decline in the last quarter, driven by sharp falls in the housing subsector. Although activity has been bolstered by a return to sites in July, this has largely driven by activity on existing sites, with uncertainty remaining around long-term demand and new orders.</p> <p>PH advised that there has been a 7% reduction on job front for the sector since April (ONS data) whilst other sectors, such as transport, were encouragingly up.</p> <p>RG suggested that at future meetings the update should cover both MPA & BAA.</p> <p>RR felt long term this is of a concern. Mainstream planning seen more applications on small developments, but large developments has dropped off.</p>	
8	Minerals Local Plan Update	MPAs / ALL
	<p>An update was circulated prior to the meeting using the agreed template and was noted.</p> <p>PD commented that advice had been received that in order to be fully compliant audio descriptions of every map/figure/graph etc in Local Plans/LAAs/Annual Monitoring Reports</p>	

	<p>were needed i.e. anything that relies on visual interpretation must also be audio described. If anyone experiences digital accessibility problems, please contact him. GG advised that theirs is being raised at the Suffolk CC DMC.</p> <p>CS advised that Cambs & Peterborough had its Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan examination last week and that consultation on modifications will go out before Christmas. Examination went well.</p>	
9	Any Other Business	ALL
	<p>It was agreed that the next meeting will be after the AMR release (post January 2021). Surveys for next year's report will be sent electronically by JS early in the New Year for return before the end of March 2021.</p>	
10	Dates of Next Meetings	RG
	<p>The date for the next meeting was confirmed as: THURSDAY 4 February 2021 at 1400hrs Venue: Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams Further dates will be agreed at the next meeting.</p>	ALL TO NOTE