

RTPI NEWS

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Minerals carbon figures set agenda for industry climate change action

Assessment of the emissions generated by mining and quarrying raw minerals in the UK and abroad will set the agenda for extractors and planners to play their part in reducing carbon levels, explains *Lester Hicks*

Minerals are essential as the UK mitigates and adapts to climate change, particularly those used in construction. They are needed for enhanced flood and coastal defences and low or zero carbon energy plant, housing and other buildings.

A key parallel issue is the carbon footprint of mineral supply itself. Identifying this allows labelling of minerals going into construction, energy generation and manufacturing. Some mineral processing is energy-intensive, with brick, cement, china clay, gypsum and potash manufacturing already subject to EU and UK carbon trading schemes.

However, few data are available about carbon levels being emitted upstream in mines and quarries and in transporting raw mineral. To plug the gap, the UK Minerals Forum set up a working group to provide sector-wide data for 2007 as one strand of study leading to its third Living with Minerals conference held in London last November.

It assessed carbon emitted in winning minerals for use and asphalt and ready-mix concrete production, often closely integrated with aggregate extraction. It also looked at emissions from transporting imported coal in the UK. It was not possible to measure emissions from smaller import streams, onshore oil and gas or from non-UK transport, which is significant in the case of imported coal.

With only limited resources, the working group relied on existing data for mineral production and transport emissions. To gauge the total material moved on mineral sites and resulting emissions, a standard 4kg of carbon per tonne was mainly applied, based on aggregates. To calculate the tonnage moved, ratios of product to non-product excavated were agreed for



Mineral extraction: road transport contributes 15 per cent of emissions

each type of mineral and haulage distances judged.

This approach has limitations and improved assessments are needed. Emissions from marine aggregate dredging should be added and total material moved on sites measured more accurately. Subject to these constraints the working group's final report, due shortly, will state that the UK mineral industries emitted about four million tonnes of carbon dioxide in 2007. This included 1.3 million tonnes — just over 32 per cent — from transport.

This is not huge compared with other UK sectors. It is less than 0.5 per cent of DEFRA's total estimate of 553 million tonnes for 2006, with 220 million tonnes emitted by energy provision and 120 million tonnes by transport. Landfill and livestock digestion emissions easily exceeded it — both are 19 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. Nevertheless, an agenda for action is required for mineral extractors.

But what should be the response? Increasing fuel and power costs already put pressure on energy use. Extending carbon trading through carbon reduction commitments should have some impact, although the trigger of bulk electricity use, measured at highest corporate level, may not catch many operators.

The working group also found much existing good practice to tackle emissions on sites and in transport. Work by the Carbon Trust funded by the aggregates levy is now helping operators apply this, with potential to do more.

For mineral planners, a major issue in responding to climate change will be site locations and transport distances. Aggregates potentially offer more supply choices than specialist minerals. An estimated 615,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide — about 15 per cent of the 2007 total — was emitted by aggregate road haulage.

Can this figure be reduced, or increases avoided by locating extraction closer to markets? Can site working be sequenced to reduce the volume of material moved? These should now be issues for minerals environmental assessments.

Lester Hicks was formerly head of minerals and waste planning at the DCIG and from 2007 convenor of the UK Mineral Forum's working group on carbon and proximity in minerals supply. He also contributes on minerals and water issues to the RTPI's environmental planning and protection (EPP) network and to the recently launched cross-network initiative to the RTPI's Planning to Live with Climate Change — Our Seven Commitments. The EPP network offers information and debate on current issues. To join, please email epp@rtpi.org.uk

“Mineral emissions are not huge compared with other UK sectors but an agenda is required for extractors”

Small consultancy makes big mark

From entry submission to winners' podium the path to a 2008 Planning Award was a battle of nerves and elements, recalls *Chris Bryson*

When Strategic Planning decided to enter for the Small Planning Consultancy of the Year Award last year, it was almost with a sense of resignation. We knew that we were a good consultancy, but we were up against potentially more than 500 across the UK vying for the accolade. But we decided to give it our best shot anyway.

The news that we were shortlisted was greeted with an overwhelming sense of achievement. "That means we are — technically speaking — one of the top five small consultancies in the UK," our managing director Paul Carson declared.

This was just the beginning. Our submission became a lot more serious after the shortlisting. The entire presentation team was extremely nervous and excited about the interview in London, including seasoned professionals such as senior consultant Bill Morrison. After all, the odds of success had now fallen to five to one.



Strategic Planning: winning team reunited after snow cancelled flights

As it turned out, the interview was a thoroughly enjoyable experience. It gave us the opportunity to enthuse about our shared passion for planning and how it affects all aspects of our society. Although we did well, the competition was pretty impressive. Awaiting the award ceremony in February proved to be most difficult.

We arrived at Belfast City Airport in good time for our flight to London, — as did a light smattering of snow that instantly ground the airport to a halt. The hours ticked away as

flight after flight was cancelled. Some might have considered this to be a bad omen and we were about to throw in the towel when two seats became available on a lunchtime flight. We would not fall at the last fence after coming so far. It was decided that Morrison and Carson should take priority and, with lunch already missed, they arrived in time for the beginning of the awards.

No sooner had they taken their seats than we were announced as winners. Still out of breath from the sprint to the London Hilton Park

Lane, the final furlong to the podium was a breeze. The rest of the runners and riders from our party arrived on a later flight in time for photos to be taken on stage with the prize, before the chairs were stacked away and lights switched off.

With a return flight already booked later that day, a round trip from Belfast to London for a grand total of three hours was well worth it. On our return, a celebration party was organised for all our clients, fellow consultants and professionals at Ba Mizu in Victoria Square. To top it all, we also received good coverage in local papers and publications and the award has raised our profile in the industry even further.

So if you feel you are a good enough company, enter for the award. As the saying goes, you have to be in it to win it. You never know, you too could defy the odds.

Chris Bryson is an associate planning consultant at Strategic Planning in Holywood, Northern Ireland. The RTPI UK and Ireland Small Planning Consultancy of the Year Award is for companies with ten or fewer planning consultants and is given in recognition of the quality of work and services delivered. For details of how to enter the 2009 award, please visit www.rtpi.org.uk/item/1095. The closing date is 28 September.

Planning Aid reaches volunteer milestone

A South West planner has become the 1,000th recruit to the ranks of the army of advisers signing up around the service network, writes *Ben Lee*

When housing and planning minister John Healey sat down behind his new desk to begin looking through his towering in-tray, many items will have been marked urgent. But one request — an invitation to help mark the recruitment of Planning Aid's 1,000th volunteer — was accepted immediately.

One of Healey's first duties was to present a commemorative scroll to the network's volunteer and skills manager Shereen Shafi. The minister's swift acceptance could be regarded as a sign of the esteem in which Planning Aid is held by its core funders. However, to Shafi, it also represents a recognition of the



Tombs: adding to professional mix

service provided by Planning Aid's army of volunteers.

"It is about more than just numbers. It is an acknowledgment that volunteering holds great appeal to planners. They are busy people but choose to give something back to society and boost their skills at the same time. For that we are extremely grateful," says Shafi.

The 1,000th volunteer is RTPI member Mark Tombs, who works in the Bristol area and has offered his skills to the South West branch. "I want to give something back to planning, particularly those people who struggle to understand the system. Volunteering offers a different mix to my day-to-day work that will ultimately improve my professional skills," he says.

Elsewhere, Yorkshire Planning Aid (YPA) has recruited 51 volunteers over the past two years, exceeding its target of 11 and bringing its total to 122. As in other parts of the country, Yorkshire volunteers are assigned to help with clients' planning cases according to their skills and experience.

One scheme is proving especially rewarding for new volunteers, some of whom may be slightly apprehensive when taking that first step. YPA's buddying system sees corporate RTPI members take the lead on Planning Aid cases, but with support from other volunteers either in

a research role or providing specialist skills.

YPA volunteers Emma Crossland Stephen and Jill Rann worked this way on a recent case. "If people know that they can lean on the job before taking on cases by themselves, I am sure that some would find the prospect less daunting. It was really helpful in working towards RTPI membership to go out with someone else to learn the ropes before being thrown in at the deep end," says Rann.

North West Planning Aid has also just celebrated the recruitment of 58 volunteers to the service in the past year with an event in Manchester. Increasing volunteering numbers should continue to highlight the value of the service, not only in the eyes of Healey and his colleagues at the DCLG but also to the scores of RTPI members who give up their time each week to help people play a more active part in planning their own areas.

Ben Lee is RTPI Planning Aid communications and public affairs officer.

Welsh workshop illustrates redundancy support in action

Guidance on how to get back into the workplace is all part of the institute's service, stresses *Chris Sheridan*

Last month I attended a workshop in Cardiff entitled "Your guide to surviving redundancy" — not because I was expecting bad news but so I could support RTPI Cymru, which is a member of the Regeneration Skills Collective Wales.

The collective consists of the RTPI, the Chartered Institute of Housing, the Institution of Civil Engineers, the Landscape Institute, RICS and the Royal Society of Architects in Wales. These bodies all recognise that redundancy is an issue facing many professionals across Wales.

The purpose of the workshop was to help delegates by offering valuable information to help them back into the workplace. It focused on advice and information on recruitment and interview techniques, writing CVs, training and general employment information, provided by a local recruitment consultant.

The session also featured information and advice on the Welsh Assembly Government's redundancy action scheme (ReAct), an initiative designed to help individuals gain new skills and return to work. The scheme provides funding up to a total of £2,500 to train professionals based in Wales.

RTPI Cymru is keen to ensure that members in Wales are aware of the information, guidance and support that the institute offers throughout the UK and Ireland and my attendance at the workshop was to present an overview of the service. This included details of the Build Up training initiative launched at the University of Westminster in London, aimed at helping professionals develop their careers.



Sheridan: skill building on offer

The programme is offering free places on three strands that will run for a year from late this month. These courses will offer planners who are unemployed or underemployed a chance to assess their careers and develop their skills.

Build Up is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England from its economic challenge investment fund, which enables universities to respond rapidly to the needs of employers and individuals during the downturn.

So if you have been affected by the recession or if you are interested to know more about how the institute is improving the practical services it offers members, then please visit the RTPI website.

Chris Sheridan is RTPI Planners in the Workplace manager. For more information, please visit www.rtpi.org.uk or email chris.sheridan@rtpi.org.uk. For more information on ReAct, please visit www.wales.gov.uk

RTPI Bulletin Board

Case studies sought for mediation in planning demonstration

Are you involved in dealing with a major development proposal, an area action plan or an enforcement case that has hit a problem which might be resolved by an independent mediator? If so, Leonora Rozee and Kay Powell would like to hear from you.

The National Planning Forum in association with the Planning Inspectorate is launching a project to demonstrate the value of mediation in planning before appeal or examination stage. The project is running in consultation with the DCLG, the Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council, the British Property Federation, the Local Government Association, Planning Aid, the RTPI, the RICS, the Law Society's planning and environmental law committee, the Planning and Environment Bar Association, the Planning Officers Society and the Planning Advisory Service.

There is no statutory legal definition of mediation. Put simply, it is a family of techniques and a framework in which to resolve intractable issues. It is a means of getting away from adversarial resolution of problems and moving towards consensus building. The forum believes that mediation, appropriately used, can be a positive way of building trust and confidence and leading to better outcomes. However, it can be wrongly seen as an admission of failure by local planning authorities or developers.

We are aiming to arrange a small number of mediations to show their value and hope to be able to provide a small amount of funding for five or six during the next few months. We would also like to find out why it is not used more widely. This could be because its value has not been shown despite a number of studies, including one by Michael Welbank and others in 2000 and 2002. Alternatively, it could be because it is not widely known about or because it is thought to be unaffordable.

If you know of a project or issue in England that would benefit from mediation, please email Leonora Rozee at ROZLEONO@aol.com or Kay Powell at secretary@natplanforum.org.uk, including your name, organisation and a brief outline of the case and issues before 21 August.

Conference to pay tribute to Nathaniel Lichfield

A conference in memory and celebration of RTPI past president Nathaniel Lichfield, a recipient of its Lifetime Achievement Award, has been organised by the institute and University College London (UCL). The event will take place at UCL on 23 October chaired by Sir Peter Hall and will debate the major issues facing UK planning and development in the light of a changing economic and social scene.

To express an interest, please email awards@rtpi.org.uk

Special early-bird offer for Young Planners' Conference

A special early-bird price is being offered for the 2009 Young Planners' Conference, Participation in Planning — How Positive Stakeholder Engagement Can Help Create Better Places, taking place on 2–3 October at the CastleGate Centre, Newcastle–Gateshead. Book before 4 September to pay £99 + VAT with a student concession.

To download the booking form, please visit www.rtpi.org.uk/download/6646/Final-Booking-form.pdf



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Conference chair:
Andy Spracklen, Founding Director, Urban8



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