

Good practice for Stakeholder Engagement in the Aggregates sector

The Issue

Under the new *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act*, engaging and involving the community in the planning process has become a legal requirement. This has presented planners, many of whom do not have extensive experience of community engagement, with the challenge of meeting the new requirements. This is particularly the case for the aggregates sector, with its significant impact on local environments.

The Solution

To promote understanding and implementation of meaningful community engagement, The Environment Council initiated a project to produce and distribute clear information aimed at the aggregates sector.

With years of experience The Environment Council is well equipped to build capacity and share best practice in the field of community involvement. Funding for this important issue came from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister through the Mineral Industry Research Organisation (MIRO). The project was limited to England due to different planning contexts elsewhere in the UK

The first step was to involve a wide range of stakeholders, including local and central government, aggregate companies, trade associations, NGOs, and engagement professionals. This ensured that the right questions were raised and that there was a high level of commitment from those in a position to implement the results.

The draft guidelines were based on a framework developed at a workshop held in July 2003, which enabled the knowledge and opinions of over 40 sector-wide participants to be captured. In December 2003 the first draft was submitted to an internet-based group of over 100 stakeholders, who reviewed it and submitted their comments. This process was repeated in January 2004 with a second draft.

The Impact

The guidelines provide a practical framework for engaging the interest and involvement of different stakeholder groups in aggregates planning, with a readable overview of current and planned legislation and different engagement techniques on offer. In addition, it informs stakeholders how they can ensure that they get involved. The document is still in demand and with the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act* in force since September 2004 the need for the guidelines is larger than ever. Much of the content and guidance is relevant outside the aggregates industry as well. Meaningful community involvement can be highly beneficial for society, but if badly run it can do more harm than good. This project has provided planners, companies and civil society with a much-needed resource to avoid pitfalls and to develop community engagement beyond a mere legal obligation

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Testimonial

"Although the workshop was specifically directed towards stakeholder engagement in aggregates planning, the messages and advice apply equally to mainstream planning."

Gerry Carpenter

Senior Planning Officer
Government Office for the North East

The Environment Council and Waste

The Environment Council has been running waste projects and stakeholder engagement for many years. Our experience in this field includes running local waste strategy workshops for Surrey and Dorset County Councils, producing "Best practice guidelines" for the waste and aggregates industries. The Environment Council also convenes the National Resource and Waste Forum, a network of companies, local authorities and civil society with an interest in addressing waste related issues. www.nrwf.org.uk



Issue area:
Aggregates

Duration:
May 2003 – March 2004

Process:
Capacity building

Stakeholders:
Local and central government
Aggregate companies
Trade associations
NGO's

