

Scottish Stone Liaison Group

NEWSLETTER

Indigenous Materials Project Team

Issue No. 12 Winter 2005

Modernising the planning system (White Paper)

On the 15th September '05 the SSLG Board approved a submission to the above White Paper which drew to the attention of the Executive the fact that the paper paid scant regard to the material needs of Scotland's built heritage and tended to focus on the needs of new developments. (Ed. – Nothing new there then!)

It is interesting to note in this document that the word "development" was mentioned 550 times, "sustainable" 43 times with "sustainable development" mentioned together only 18 times.

The case made, namely seeking a uniform interpretation of "sustainable", has been mentioned in the "*Analysis of Responses*" to the White Paper with the point raised by the SSLG, that the "*Brundtland Report of 1983*", provided a good clear and unequivocal statement being noted.

However is it "sustainable" to permit the importation of stone from the other side of the world when there are suitable and time tested indigenous stone resources available within Scotland? If the reply is "YES" then how does such a policy balance with other stated Government policies on issues like "global warming" or "energy use"? The case being made

Returning to the White Paper - The SSLG submission highlighted the potential for confusion in the White Paper by the way in which the words – "sustainable", "development" and "sustainable developments" are peppered throughout the publication.

Does the reference to "sustainable developments" mean that other "developments" are not therefore "sustainable" and, if so, where does this place the HMG document entitled "*One future – different paths*", which has been signed by the Prime Minister and the Leaders of the devolved systems of government?

Here Scotland's First Minister is quoted as saying "*We can and must break the link with environmental damage*" (page 1) and later highlights the shared priorities for UK Action (page 9) where there are clear statements referring to "*achieving more with less. This means not only looking at how goods and services are produced, but also on the impacts of products and materials across their whole lifecycle*", "*the effects of a changing climate can already be seen. Temperatures and sea levels are rising, ice and snow cover are declining*", "*We will seek to secure a profound change in the way we generate and use energy, and in other activities*

by the SSLG is that there are possible policy contradictions and these have to be both recognised and addressed.

In the “worst case scenarios”, detailed in the Natural Environment Research Council publication entitled “*Climate Change – scientific certainties and uncertainties*”, the sea levels would rise almost a metre in this century with resultant flooding damaging many coastal cities. Yet many of the current developments are in these very areas - in Leith, Glasgow and many towns around Scotland or the world for that matter.

that release these gases”. “We must take domestic action now, to get the UK’s own house in order, and address the international impacts of our domestic policies (page 10)”.

How these statements stand against the Planning White Paper is open to speculation.

Falling Masonry Group

In March '04 the SSLG was invited to attend a Working Group that was established to progress the “RISKS TO PUBLIC SAFETY FROM FALLING MASONRY AND OTHER MATERIALS - REPORT ON A SCOPING STUDY”. The SSLG’s Chief Executive has attended every meeting of this Group and in October '04 produced a draft paper that was apparently agreed but, to date, this Working Party has failed to produce a final paper.

The SSLG has subsequently been advised that this paper will be available within a matter of weeks following the turn of the year – early '06.

Seminar 4th Nov 2005

On the 4th November the SSLG, in conjunction with Stirling Council and the Stirling Heritage Trust, held a Seminar entitled “*Joined Up Thinking*” in the Stirling Council Civic Chambers. The event was targeted at local authorities and architectural companies involved in the repair and maintenance of Scotland’s built heritage.

The event was opened by the Provost of Stirling, **Cllr Colin O’Brien**, who welcomed the delegates to the Seminar. Mr A McKinney, CEO SSLG, who chaired the proceedings, thanked the Provost for the use of the venue and for the hospitality of the Council. He also expressed his thanks to COSLA for actively promoting the event.

The tone of the day was set by **Susan Dickie**, VisitScotland, who underlined the importance of Scotland’s built heritage from the tourist point of view (resulting in 21,500 jobs and earning

The feedback has been positive with a number of comments indicating that time had been well spent.

The event, able to accommodate only 100 delegates, was significantly oversubscribed with quite a few late bookings having to be declined. In an effort to redress this situation the SSLG has now written to every Local Authority in Scotland offering to meet with the officers to discuss the possibility of smaller and more bespoke seminars seeking to meet the needs of individual councils. It is hoped that these could be arranged around the Country, on a geographic basis, and if this is possible, efforts will be made enable architects and others attend.

view (resulting in 21,500 jobs and earning Scotland some £4.5b per annum). **Mr I Maxwell**, Historic Scotland, then highlighted the specific difficulties faced in addressing the issues surrounding the built heritage, with **Dr E Hyslop** and **Mr A McMillan**, both BGS, respectively addressing the damage arising from the incorrect use of stone and the mapping of indigenous reserves. **Dr Tim Yates**, from the Building Research Establishment, then covered lifecycle costing with **Mr D Urquhart**, Project Manager, advising on the progress being made on the SSLG's Glasgow Project. The event was drawn to a close by **Mr M MacLeod**, of the City of Edinburgh, who highlighted the manner in which it dealt with buildings and problems it confronted. (also see City of Edinburgh).

Glasgow Project

Readers following this issue through the Newsletters will be aware that the building inspection element of the Project, being undertaken by the British Geological Survey, has progressed well over the summer, and early winter, with core samples having been taken from some 81 buildings and 230 buildings having been visually examined.

The skills aspect, although initially having slipped behind the programme schedule, is now being addressed by the new Heritage Training Adviser, Mr Richard Groom, and it is anticipated that the programme will again be "back on track". The fourth meeting of the Glasgow Advisory Team was held on the 8th December '05 and received reports from both the BGS and Mr Richard Groom. Mr D Urquhart, the appointed Project Manager, anticipates the final report being prepared in the summer of 2006 and the SSLG is now making arrangements for the launch of this unique piece of research.

City of Edinburgh

On the 13th December '05 the City of Edinburgh Council held a "*Repairs to Private Property Training Seminar*" which was very well attended. Each delegate was provided with a pack containing the publications that the City has been developing and these offer guidance on a range of issues – such as "Building condition survey – an owner's guide" and "Maintenance planner & cost calculator". Councils, are looking to address the needs of their community, would be advised to secure copies of these publications as they provide a template which could be replicated across Scotland.

14th EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRY GEOLOGY CONFERENCE, EDINBURGH 15–17TH June 2006

For the first time in its long and distinguished history the conference will be held in Scotland - in Edinburgh appropriately which, through the legacy of James Hutton, can be considered the cradle of modern geology. The 14th conference will also

include sessions devoted to building stone and coal extraction.. For further details contact: Graham Smith, EIG 2006 Conference Secretary graham@caplaw.demon.co.uk

Or simply complete the reply form online at: www.eigconference.org

Editor: Alan McKinney
Scottish Stone Liaison Group
Room 133, Pentlandfield Business Park, The Bush, Roslin EH25 9RE
Tel: 0131 448 0313 Fax: 0131 440 4032