

Meeting between Welsh Government, Caerphilly County Borough Council and Natural Resources Wales - Update on the former Ty Llwyd Quarry Site June 4

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Objectives of meeting
3. Update from Natural Resources Wales (NRW)
4. Update from Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC)
5. A.O.B / Next Steps

Attendees

Philip Bowen – Deputy Director Environmental Protection (Welsh Government)
Olwen Spiller – Deputy Head of Environmental Protection. Chair, (Welsh Government)
Richard Clark – Head of Local Environment Quality Team (Welsh Government)
Andy Williams – Senior Local Environment Quality Manager (Welsh Government)
Ceri Edwards – Environmental Health Manager - (Caerphilly County Borough Council)
Robert Hartshorn - Head of Public Protection, Community & Leisure (Caerphilly County Borough Council)
Maria Godfrey – Team Leader – Pollution Control and Emergency Planning & Resilience (Caerphilly County Borough Council)
Ceri Davis – Environmental Health Officer – Pollution Control (Caerphilly County Borough Council)
John Rock – Operations Manager SE Wales (Natural Resources Wales)
Trystan James – Team Leader Geoscience (Natural Resources Wales)
Matthew Llewellyn – Specialist Adviser (Contaminated Land) (Natural Resources Wales)
Hannah Biggs – Geoscience team (Natural Resources Wales)
Gavin Summerhill – Environment Officer (Incident Response) (Natural Resources Wales)
Kate Rodgers – Environment Team – (Natural Resources Wales)

Apologies

Kirsty Lewis – Senior Environment Officer (Natural Resources Wales)

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Objective of Meeting

Olwen Spiller stated the meeting's objective was to gain an update on the work being undertaken to address concerns relating to Ty Llwyd Quarry.

3. Update from Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

Kate Rodgers (NRW) explained that a Notice had been served on the Council by NRW which included four actions to be undertaken at the site. These are a remediation options feasibility study, an incident response plan to deal with flooding issues, interim measures to address the leachate collection system and to submit

an action plan based on the Remediation Feasibility Options Report, provided by the Council's contractor Arcadis. The Notice runs until the end of June.

Andy Williams (WG) asked if the Notice actions with a May deadline had been met. Kate confirmed this was the case.

Matt Llewellyn (NRW) noted the Remediation Feasibility Options Report document was being assessed by NRW resulting in further discussions with the Council being required for example re identifying a preferred option. The Council's Part 2A assessment is currently being compiled by Arcadis and NRW is expecting to see this shortly.

4. Update from Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC)

In providing this Maria Godfrey (CCBC) confirmed there had been one flooding incident over the winter where drainage and run-off waters were leaving the site; during wet weather periods staff were monitoring the site daily. Water leaving the site was sampled and the results were broadly compliant although she noted the interpretation of some metal levels was not straightforward. Drainage water had moved onto nearby land used to keep horses and the Council liaised with the owner requiring water and soil samples being collected to check and subsequently confirm there were no negative impacts.

After a period of reduced interest in the site, there had been an increase in press enquiries and requests for information which have been addressed, promptly, by CCBC.

Sampling has identified elevated levels of pollutants within the fenced off woodland area, however these levels fell within Environmental Quality Standard thresholds at compliance point. Consultants are continuing to monitor to inform the Part 2A assessment process (as referenced above). The Council is seeking comments and input from other stakeholders including advice regarding impacts on ecology, this information may be a requirement for future discharge consents in addition to informing the Part 2A process.

A Remediation Feasibility Options Report has been submitted to NRW. Interim proposals for improvement measures to address leachate issues have also been submitted. However, more detail engineering solutions are required. This will be provided by a deeper dive report from the consultants to the Council. An action plan is also being drafted by the consultants on the Council's behalf. There is still considerable work to be completed to fully assess the feasibility of all options. This includes various treatment methods for the leachate, removing the waste from the quarry, capping and grouting/ solidification of the waste in situ. It is possible a combination of remediation measures will be identified as possible options.

Andy Williams (WG) asked if there was an estimate of costs associated with the remediation options being considered. Maria suggested that potential costs ranged from several million to tens of millions.

Maria Godfrey (CBCC) explained the site was also being affected by the surrounding farmland during peak rainfall events where nearby fields were draining onto the landfill site and worsening the drainage problems. There is a requirement therefore to keep surface runoff and leachate separate where possible.

Robert Hartshorn (CCBC) confirmed the Council had intended to issue an updated newsletter for residents however there had been some delays and due to pre-election campaign rules it will now be circulated at a later date. Olwen Spiller (WG) asked if this could be shared with Welsh Government and Robert Hartshorn agreed to this.

Ceri Edwards (CBCC) stated that given the potential high costs some remediation options may not be economically feasible, it is likely the Council will need to seek financial assistance from WG. Maria Godfrey (CCBC) noted any option appraisal would need to ensure the costs of remediation were proportionate to the risks. She explained that due to the site's publicity it had also placed a significant pressure on the Council's pollution team.

Olwen Spiller (WG) agreed a proportionate response to the pollution issue was required, however noted there was a need to meet regulatory requirements. It was also important to manage communications associated with the site. She asked if there had been any change in the level of interest in the site following recent media attention. Maria Godfrey (CCBC) explained this had broadly remained the same and there had been limited interest in the wider community.

Maria Godfrey (CCBC) outlined to the group the various remediation options again and explained the potential costs would be highly variable depending on the option taken. Olwen Spiller (WG) asked if there was a timetable for selecting the preferred remediation option. Maria explained this was likely to be during September.

Kate Rodgers (NRW) asked whether any short-term interventions could be introduced to help reduce potential pollution impacts. This could be considered when deciding on longer term remediation measures. Philip Bowen (WG) asked if funding could be used to help divert drainage from adjacent farmland and avoid it entering the site and mixing with leachate during wet weather. Maria Godfrey (CCBC) explained that investigations were ongoing re considering such options.

Andy Williams (WG) asked how significant the pollution was leaving the site during flood events. Ceri Davies (CCBC) explained that much of the testing during flood events did not identify significant elevated levels of pollutants. The main pollutants identified were total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) and their levels were mostly only marginally elevated. Maria Godfrey (CCBC) added the discharges from the aeration chamber are directed back to the ground and pollutants are largely contained within that area.

Ceri Edwards (CCBC) raised the potential for changes to weather patterns due to Climate Change and this needed to be considered during the evaluation of future remediation options for the site.

5. AOB

Olwen Spiller (WG) thanked everyone for the update and noted the following key points in summary:

- CBCC will share timetable of remediation considerations and draft newsletter.
- CBCC to have further discussions regarding the site with Welsh Government officials before the September meeting.

It was agreed the group would reconvene in September 2024.