

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2013-2014

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
COMMITTEE
6 FEBRUARY 2014**

**REPORT OF:
SERVICE DIRECTOR
PLANNING**

	Agenda Item No.9
<p>APPLICATION NO: 13/1223 - OBSERVATIONS REQUESTED BY ADJACENT PLANNING AUTHORITY: CONTINUED EXTRACTION OF COAL AND SANDSTONE AND THE IMPORTATION OF MINING WASTE FROM UNITY MINE AND THE RETENTION OF THE HAUL ROAD FOR A TEMPORARY PERIOD UNTIL 31ST DECEMBER 2014 (CONSULTATION WITH NEIGHBOURING LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY), BWLCH FFOS OCCS RESOLVEN, NEATH.</p>	

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To determine the observations on the planning application which is to be determined by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.

2. RECOMMENDATION

To raise no objection and to forward the observations of this Authority to Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.

3. BACKGROUND

This application seeks approval for the continuation of the extraction of coal and sandstone from the site and the transportation of mine waste from Unity Mine on land at Bwlch Ffos OCCS, Cwmgwrach, Resolven, Neath.

The application site is located some 2.5km to the south of Cwmgwrach village and 3.5km to the east of Resolven. The proposed development site is centred on national grid reference (NGR) SN28700 02500. Access to the site is gained via a private access track from the junction of the A465 and the

B4242, through Unity Mine and via a Natural Resources Wales (Former Forestry Commission) track onto the A4061.

The present footprint of the permitted area extends to some 58 hectares, and it is proposed to place 34 hectares to the north and south of the current operational area into aftercare. Waste transferred from the underground mining operations would be used to continue the restoration scheme. All operations, management schemes and restoration schemes remain unaltered.

The main vehicular movements for all heavy service, delivery and coal lorries would use an existing forestry track to reach Unity Mine where the coal would be blended and would be exported using a combination of rail or vehicles via the A465 and the M4 motorway at Junction 43 Llandarcy. The saleable sandstone would be exported by road using the same route. All mine waste from Utility mine would not enter the public highway.

A secondary access that leaves the site in a north easterly direction, for some 12km to reach the A4061 Treherbert Road just south of the former offices of Tower Colliery, would continue to be used for personnel/small service vehicles and the occasional low-loader. This route is entirely within NRW control. It is not proposed to undertake any improvements to the route as a result of this development, although it is understood that improvements may be proposed as a result of nearby wind farm scheme(s).

There is an extensive network of public rights of way that afford access to Mynydd Resolven and Rheola Forest. These routes include a section of the Coed Morgannwg Way and the St Illtyd's Walk path which form part of the National Network (Route No. 47), and runs in a north-east to south-west direction, some 2km to the south and rest of the extraction area. The access road also crosses two other footpaths: 56/2/1 and 27/10/1 within the northern section of the access road.

The location of the Bwlch Ffos site is such that there are no noise sensitive properties within 1km of the operational site. The closest residential properties to the mining site are isolated dwellings: Blaegwrach Farm, located approximately one kilometre to the north of the site; Argoed a further 300m to the north-west; and Pen-y-Cae a similar distance to the north-east. In all other directions, the closest residential properties are at least 2km away from the operational site boundary.

It is understood that site operations, other than water pumping, servicing, environmental monitoring, or maintenance of plant would continue to be carried out at the site between the following times: 07.00 hours and 19.00 hours Monday to Friday. 07.00 hours and 13.00 hours Saturdays. No working would take place on Sundays or Bank.

All of the land occupied by Bryncwm Mining Site is controlled by NRW. Before this current mining activity took place the land consisted of part clear felled forest a disused quarry and remnants of shallow underground mining activity which had been long abandoned. The planned restoration of the land with improved drainage and grading together with proposed planting and sowing which will be incorporated into any future aftercare scheme would in time contribute to increased biodiversity.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

There are a number of previous planning applications which relate to the use of the proposed access onto the A4061, which have been determined by Neath Port Talbot, Rhondda Cynon Taf or the former Mid Glamorgan County Council.

5. PUBLICITY

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council would have undertaken publicity for the application

6. POLICY CONTEXT

Would be advised by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

7. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

The site is located well within the administrative boundary of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, and is surrounded by forestry plantations. It is therefore considered that the effects of continuing operations at the site on landscape and visual amenity are unlikely to be noticeable from within Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The site proposes to use an existing access road which lies within the administrative boundary of Rhondda Cynon Taf, which is an existing forestry access road onto the A4061, just south of the former offices of Tower Colliery. It would be used for limited light vehicular movements involving staff and the occasional low loader. The main heavy goods vehicle (hgv) movements would be via the A465 and M4 motorway at Junction 43 Llandarcy. Taking these matters into consideration no highway objection has been raised by the Transportation Section as it is considered that this proposed development would have no adverse impact on Rhondda Cynon Taf in terms of highway safety.

The secondary access road crosses a number of Public Rights of Way, some of which are within RCT. It is therefore considered that the developer should

consult the Council's Public Right Of Way Officer, prior to works continuing, in order to ensure that the necessary health and safety precautions are provided in the interests of the enjoyment and safety of the public using these routes.

RECOMMENDATION: Raise no objection.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

as amended by

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

6 FEBRUARY 2014

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REPORT

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BY ADJACENT PLANNING
AUTHORITY: CONTINUED
EXTRACTION OF COAL AND
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IMPORTATION OF MINING
WASTE FROM UNITY MINE
AND THE RETENTION OF THE
HAUL ROAD FOR A
TEMPORARY PERIOD UNTIL
31ST DECEMBER 2014
(CONSULTATION WITH
NEIGHBOURING LOCAL
PLANNING AUTHORITY),
BWLCH FFOS OCCS
RESOLVEN, NEATH.**

OFFICER TO CONTACT

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See Relevant Application File

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