

**Meeting between Welsh Government, Caerphilly County Borough Council and
Natural Resources Wales - Update on the former Ty Llwyd Quarry Site
8 November, 14:00 – 15:00**

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

Attendees

Olwen Spiller – Deputy Head of Environmental Protection (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 - (CCBC)

Robert Hartshorn - Head of Public Protection, Community & Leisure (CCBC)

Maria Godfrey – Team Leader – Pollution Control and Emergency Planning &
Resilience (CCBC)

Ceri Davis – Environmental Health Officer – Pollution Control (CCBC)

John Rock – Operations Manager SE Wales (NRW)

Kirsty Lewis – Senior Environment Officer (NRW)

Trystan James – Team Leader Geoscience (NRW)

Matthew Llewellyn – Specialist Adviser (Contaminated Land) (NRW)

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Objectives of Meeting

Olwen Spiller highlighted the objectives of the meeting which was to gain an update on the work being undertaken to address concerns relating to Ty Llwyd Quarry.

3. Update from Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC)

Maria Godfrey provided an update on the work being undertaken by consultants on several aspects related to the quarry. This included a methodology for work on the site in relation to Part 2a responsibilities and the Natural Resources Wales (NRW) discharge consent.

Arcadis had developed a draft monitoring strategy and high level remediation options appraisal for the site which will be shared on completion. These include:

- i) Removal of waste from the site;
- ii) Pumping leachate out for disposal,
- iii) Pumping leachate for onsite treatment and;
- iv) Grouting tip (solidification).

Arcadis are assessing the costs and delivery implications of the four remediation options above and flow monitoring is central to some of this work. Therefore, further flow monitoring is required for the site (particularly during periods of high flow) and further measurements are planned during the winter months.

It was noted that only recently had incidents of groundwater outbreaks into leachate chamber been reported and the amounts were negligible.

A small number of incidents have been reported behind Glenview Terrace near the quarry. Water discharge from ground with orange staining. The Council are encouraging residents to report incidents as they happen. Nothing significant has been recorded in testing undertaken, however PCB analysis had been affected by laboratory issues. The Council are awaiting results.

Wider monitoring of springs within the area around the quarry has detected the presence of metals. The Council are discussing the implications of this with NRW.

The Council were considering what (if any) options could be put in place over the winter months. One of the potential options was removal of leachate by tanker from the aeration chamber at times when it may become overwhelmed, however, this option may not be feasible – given the volume of water may be too great and the lack of capacity to hold water on site pending its removal. No firm winter management plans in place. The Council are having conversations with Egan waste (tanker contractors) currently. Council staff are visiting the site to monitor conditions regularly.

The Council advised they would contact PHW in respect of any breaches off site if there was a need to undertake any sampling over the winter and will continue their due diligence responsibilities. The site is having significant resources implications for the pollution team. A local resident newsletter update will be circulated soon.

Andy Williams (WG) asked about the costs and timescales associated with the options – Maria said that they did not have timescales as yet but would feed this back when that information was available and costs had been calculated, but these would likely be heavily caveated at this stage due to limited flow data. Further details on costs and timescales will be provided in the future for remediation options.

Trystan James (NRW) asked how the Part 2a assessment for the site was progressing. Maria explained it was proceeding well and this was being undertaken alongside the wider options appraisal work. It was noted that even if the site was not determined under Part 2a, this work would still support the requirements of the NRW discharge consent. It was added that four to five rounds of spring sampling were

being conducted and this would feed into the Part 2a assessment as well as sampling of the River Sirhowy, air quality monitoring in and around the site and soil sampling on site. One future consideration was to trial the use of a skimmers over the winter to see if it delivers benefits, however there were concerns that accessing the site with this equipment may potentially be an issue. It was also noted the skimmer would only help remove free phase material.

Matt Llewellyn (NRW) suggested the Council may need to incorporate climate change implications into any risk assessment and future monitoring for the site. However, he acknowledged this is an evolving area within this subject and offered to signpost the Council to further information.

Action - Matt to provide this information to CCBC.

4. Update from Natural Resources Wales

John Rock (NRW) noted NRW has no current practical involvement on the site.

NRW continues to receive a high volume of correspondence from a very small number of individuals which has a significant impact on NRW staff with over 40 NRW personnel dealing with these enquiries. An internal review of complaints relating to the provision of information related to the site has been undertaken (which upheld how the team had dealt with the requests) and now any future correspondence was being referred to the ICO.

Robert Hartshorn (CCBC) commented that the Council have attempted to build relationships with interested stakeholders through meetings. This approach was currently being reviewed given concerns information had subsequently been inaccurately portrayed or misrepresented.

Kirsty Lewis (NRW) provided an overview of the planned monitoring over a four-month period in 2024 of PCB, sediment and biological assessments (including a fish count). This would take place in a nearby watercourse upstream and downstream from the site. No current signs of any environmental impact.

Andy Williams (WG) asked whether NRW had set a deadline for introducing the Environmental Permit required for discharges from the site. Kirsty Lewis confirmed pre-application advice will be provided and then timescales will kick in. The discussions for developing the permit are ongoing.

Maria Godfrey (CCBC) confirmed that the Council kept Kirsty and NRW updated regularly on this matter. She also explained that further flow monitoring of leachate was required to inform future work but this was complicated and challenging. Arcadis are also working with the Council to help with flow rate monitoring. Kirsty Lewis (NRW) indicated she may have some flow rate meter information which could be shared with CCBC.

Action: Kirsty to share this with CCBC.

John Rock (NRW) noted he was keen to continue working with the CCBC to achieve an appropriate outcome for the site whilst acknowledging the challenges it presented. This would enable them to identify the best approach and ensure an effective and value for money solution is identified.

5. AOB

Maria Godfrey (CCBC) commented that it is likely that a series of treatment options will be put forward with different cost options for each. The Council will need to make sure they are sensible and proportionate in their approach and a cost benefit analysis will need to be undertaken.

Current costs relating to the site are extensive. Every time a monitoring sample is requested the laboratory costs are £450. This figure does not include staff costs and resources to facilitate this activity, or interpretation of results.

Part 2A assessment is likely to come to a conclusion in 6-8 months' time, the production of the final report may take slightly longer. The discharge consent for NRW is also likely to require some sort of major treatment process. The Council have considered discharging to the foul system, however, Welsh Water require discharges to meet Environmental Quality Standards before being discharged to the sewer.

Ceri Edwards (CCBC) noted concerns had been raised that the publicity relating to the site presented the potential to blight property prices within the surrounding communities. There is some suggestion that house sales have fallen through because of the negative publicity. It was noted there was limited evidence to indicate there was wider significant concerns within the local community regarding the site since last meeting. One complaint relating to a sulphurous odour at the Wyllie Bends had been received, but not confirmed if it is related to the site.

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

- Requirement for Caerphilly Council to undertake further monitoring work over the winter period to inform ongoing development of future site management proposals.
- Clear that ongoing monitoring work is necessary to ensure a sustainable approach and outcome is achieved.

It was agreed the group would reconvene early in 2024 for further update, however communication channels would remain open should further briefing be required for the Minister.