

Agenda Supplement – Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee room 4 Tŷ Hywel
and video Conference via Zoom

Meeting date: 9 May 2024

Meeting time: 09.30

For further information contact:

Marc Wyn Jones

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddClimate@senedd.wales

Supplementary Pack 01 – 9 May 2024

Please note the documents below are in addition to those published in the main Agenda and Reports pack for this Meeting

6.4 Restoration of opencast mining sites

(Pages 1 – 3)

Attached Documents:

Response from the Chief Executive of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council to the Chair in relation to the Ffos-y-Fran opencast coalmine site

Response from Merthyr South Wales Limited to the Chair in relation to the Ffos-y-Fran opencast coalmine site



Llyr Gruffydd MS
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Ein Cyf / Our ref: EC/JJ
Eich Cyf / Your ref:
Dyddiad/Date: 7th May 2024

Gofynnwch am / Please ask for: Ellis Cooper
Llinell Uniongyrchol / Direct Line: 01685 725000
e-bost / e-mail: Ellis.Cooper@merthyr.gov.uk

Dear Llyr Gruffydd MS,

I trust this letter finds you well.

Thank you for your correspondence dated 30th April 2024, concerning the ongoing inquiry by the Senedd's Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee into opencast mining, with particular emphasis on the Ffos-y-Fran site.

Firstly, can I apologise in the fact I was on holiday when your first request came through and was unable to respond in person. We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this discussion. While we initially provided written evidence to the inquiry, the recent decline of the invitation extended to our organisation to attend the Committee meeting was not indicative of any disregard for the importance of the issue at hand, but rather due to scheduling constraints and our officer's ability to only provide evidence on bullet point one of your request - *The financial and Practical arrangements in place for the restoration of the opencast site.*

We fully recognise the value of our participation in the Committee's proceedings and are committed to engaging constructively with your inquiries. Therefore, we are pleased to accept the invitation for Council officers and the Leader, Geraint Thomas, to attend the upcoming meeting on 22nd May, scheduled between 9:30 am and 12:00 noon.

Furthermore, given the complex nature of the subject matter under discussion, we respectfully request the opportunity to bring a panel of officers to cover the various issues concerning the mine relative to bullet point one. It is our belief that a panel approach will ensure comprehensive coverage of the diverse aspects of this topic and provide the Committee with a more nuanced understanding of the complexities involved.

If it is feasible, we would like to propose the following representatives to be in attendance:

1. Geraint Thomas - Leader of the Council
2. Ellis Cooper - Chief Executive
3. Judith Jones - Director of Neighbourhood Services
4. Carwyn Morris - Head of Engineering
5. David Cross - Principal Planning Officer
6. Geraint Morgan - Solicitor

Ellis Cooper BSc. (Hons)
Prif Weithredwr
Chief Executive

Please consider this request and if possible, kindly confirm whether the Committee would be amenable to accommodating a panel of officers from our organisation for the meeting on 22nd May.

Thank you once again for extending this invitation and we look forward to the opportunity to collaborate with the Committee on this crucial issue.

Yours sincerely



ELLIS COOPER
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Climate Change Committee Meeting - 9th. May 2024
Statement – Merthyr (South Wales) Limited

Since the cessation of the mining operation in November 2023, Merthyr (South Wales) Limited continues to manage the Ffos-y Fran site to comply with Health & Safety Executive guidelines under The Quarries Regulations 1999.

Post closure of the mining operation the Company selected personnel with some combined 250 years of surface mining experience to form the core of the sites C&M (Care & Maintenance) team. The C&M team are responsible for routinely monitoring all safety and environmental aspects of the site, including water levels and water quality.

The C&M team complete daily checks of the water quality to ensure the water discharges are within consent limits set by NRW (Natural Resources Wales). This is supported with a quarterly water testing programme agreed with NRW. Water samples are tested by an accredited laboratory for a comprehensive suite of determinants. Results indicate there are no determinants that raise a cause for concern to the water environment.

All analytical data is either submitted to NRW or made available for inspection on routine site visits at their request.

Ground Water levels under the guidance of a consultant hydrogeologist, are being monitored on a regular basis, within the mine and are reviewed with NRW and MTCBC (Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council)

Following one of the wettest winters on record ground water levels have stabilised around the levels monitored prior to commencing mining operations on the site.

Recent trend indicates a fall in water levels, this will be monitored throughout the summer months to establish if there is, as anticipated, a seasonal change in the ground water level, within the range previously monitored.

Therefore, ground water levels remain some 200 feet (60 metres) below the lowest natural ground level located to the North of the site.

Following consultation MSW have reached a formal agreement with MTCBC to commence an interim restoration programme of works for the site, which is due to commence in early May 2024.

MSW have engaged the services of several external consultants, specialists in their field, to prepare a revised restoration plan. MSW continues to discuss with MTCBC and all relevant key stakeholders progress on the revised restoration plan.

Therefore, it would be inappropriate to comment further until the revised restoration plan has been finalised and submitted to MTCBC for their consideration.