

1 RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

2 Minutes of the virtual meeting of the  
3 Planning and Development Committee held on  
4 Thursday, 7 October 2021 at 3.00 pm  
5

6 County Borough Councillors - Planning and Development  
7 Committee Members in attendance:-

8 Councillor S Rees (Chair)

9 Councillor G Caple Councillor J Bonetto  
10 Councillor P Jarman Councillor D Grehan  
11 Councillor G Hughes Councillor J Williams  
12 Councillor W Lewis Councillor W Owen  
13 Councillor D Williams Councillor S Powderhill

14 Officers in attendance:-

15 Mr C Jones, Head of Major Development and Investment  
16 Mr J Bailey, Head of Planning  
17 Mr S Humphreys, Head of Legal Services  
18 Mr. A Rees, Senior Engineer

19 County Borough Councillors in attendance:-

20 Councillor J Barton and Councillor J Brencher

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22 (Transcript of a digital recording by  
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2 THE CHAIR: Good afternoon and welcome to this Planning and  
3 Development Committee of 7th October 2021. Are there any  
4 declarations of interest?

5 COUNCILLOR D WILLIAMS: I would like to declare interest, Chair,  
6 on item 21/0720/15, continuation of quarrying at Craig Yr  
7 Hesg. I am a member of the Hanson Quarry Opposition Group.

8 THE CHAIR: Okay, thank you for that, Councillor Williams.  
9 Councillor Jarman?

10 COUNCILLOR JARMAN: Thank you, Chair. Application 21/0635,  
11 Bodwenarth Farm, Albion Court, Cilfyndd, a personal interest.  
12 The applicant phoned me after the last meeting. I told her to  
13 submit her comments to all members of the Committee and  
14 Planning Department. I did not pre-determine the application.

15 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Councillor Jarman. Council Grehan?

16 COUNCILLOR GREHAN: Thank you Chair.

17 With regards to 20/1365, I know Mr Cadi that lives in my  
18 ward so it's a personal matter.

19 THE CHAIR: Thank you for that, Councillor Grehan. Councillor  
20 Williams, did you want to come back in?

21 COUNCILLOR WILLIAMS: Yes, I have to tell you, Chair, it is  
22 personal and prejudicial and I will be leaving the meeting.

23 THE CHAIR: Okay, thank you for that, Councillor Williams. Can we  
24 get a motion, please, to observe the Human Rights Act?

25 A SPEAKER: I move, Chair.

1 THE CHAIR: And seconder?

2 A SPEAKER: (*Speaking in Welsh*). (1 minute in from start)

3 THE CHAIR: And all in favour. And a motion to observe the

4 Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

5 A SPEAKER: I move, Chair.

6 A SPEAKER: I second Chair.

7 THE CHAIR: Are all members in favour? Thank you. And again a

8 motion for the minutes of 26th August 2021?

9 A SPEAKER: I move, Chair:

10 THE CHAIR: Is that seconded?

11 A SPEAKER: Seconded.

12 THE CHAIR: Thank you, and all in favour. Okay, thank you

13 everyone. We have, as usual, re-ordered the agenda so we can

14 accommodate those items with public speakers first. The first

15 item today will be item 6 and this is application number

16 20/1365.

17 (*Further applications were dealt with*)

18 THE CHAIR: We now move on to item 12 on the agenda. This is

19 application 21/0720, continuation of quarry and related

20 operations, et cetera, Craig Yr Hesg Quarry, Berw Road,

21 Pontypridd. Mr. Bailey.

22 MR. BAILEY: Thank you, Chair. This application came before

23 Committee, as members will recall, on 26th August, where

24 members clearly resolved that they wished to refuse the

25 application contrary to ----

1 MR. HUMPHREYS: Sorry, to come in, but Councillor Williams needs  
2 to leave. He has his hand up to leave.

3 COUNCILLOR D WILLIAMS: You had better kick me out here, Chair.

4 THE CHAIR: Yes, thank you.

5 *(Councillor D Williams left the meeting)*

6 MR. BAILEY: Sorry, Chair, to pick up, so at the 26th August  
7 meeting, members resolved that they were minded to refuse  
8 permission contrary to recommendation. As I think I probably  
9 indicated and as was expected, once the application ticked  
10 past its 16-week determination period, an appeal against  
11 non-determination was lodged with the Planning Inspectorate  
12 (who were no longer called the Planning Inspectorate) by the  
13 applicants.

14 That then triggered, as in a recent case that we had, a  
15 month of dual jurisdiction, so effectively we have got until  
16 12th October, so next Tuesday, in which to determine this  
17 application. So, if members make a decision tonight, rest  
18 assured that the Authority have determined this planning  
19 application. We still retain that power, as I say, until next  
20 week, the 12th.

21 Just before I go into the presentation, Chair, we have  
22 got one late letter. This states, "The report highlights that  
23 Glyncoch is ranked as one of the most deprived areas within  
24 Rhondda Cynon Taf and the impact on health and local air  
25 quality is therefore recognised as being a significant concern

1 to the local community." It goes on to say that "it is  
2 acknowledged that actions to improve air quality by reducing  
3 the long-term source may result in some public health  
4 benefits. In the case of Glyncoch, there are few local  
5 industrial sources other than the Quarry. The public health  
6 section of the Council say that in the report there is a  
7 fundamental weakness in refusing the application on health and  
8 air quality grounds as both Cwm Taf Health Board and Public  
9 Health Wales indicate the air quality to be compliant and they  
10 have no grounds for any objection based on public health  
11 concerns.

12 "I recently submitted a Freedom of Information Request  
13 to both these bodies and the replies are below. The question  
14 was asked, 'I should be obliged if you could let me have the  
15 following information: the number of people living in the  
16 community of Glyncoch, Pontypridd with chest-related problems,  
17 i.e., COPD, asthma, compared to other communities within the  
18 Borough.' The answer from Cwm Taf Health Board: 'We can  
19 confirm that the Health Board does not hold the information  
20 that you require. We do not keep registers of existing  
21 conditions for members of the population.' The answer from  
22 Public Health Wales: 'Thank you for your recent request.  
23 Unfortunately, we do not hold this data on our system.'

24 "I question, therefore, having been given the  
25 information at a previous meeting of the Committee where one

1 of the speakers was a doctor from Glyncoch, who stated that  
2 this community has the highest level of chest infection in the  
3 whole of the County Borough, how the two bodies that were  
4 consulted say there is no issue. When you say in the report  
5 that mineral dust is a nuisance and does not pose a risk to  
6 human health, I would question that statement as we do not  
7 monitor PM2.5 levels. That is the dust you are not able to  
8 see that lies and there lies the problem.

9 "Silica dust is extremely harmful and long-term exposure  
10 will have a profound impact on people's health in the  
11 community. I would ask the Committee to seriously consider  
12 the impacts this will have if the application is granted.  
13 Thank you for allowing me to submit this late letter."

14 As was discussed at some length at the previous meeting,  
15 Chair, members clearly felt that there were concerns in  
16 respect of the health and amenity impacts within the area of  
17 the quarry. Just to confirm, as it is set out in the report,  
18 this application does not seek the geographical extension of  
19 the quarry. That was the previous application that was  
20 refused in July of last year and which is already the subject  
21 of an appeal with the Inspectorate. This application purely  
22 seeks to extend the period for a period of six years to take  
23 out the extent of material that has already been approved, but  
24 Hansons have indicated that they feel they are unable to do  
25 that and clearly with the existing time deadline of 31st

1 December 2022 approaching, a period of a further six years is  
2 required to take out that material, working it out at an  
3 average of 400,000 tonnes per annum.

4 The report in front of you this evening sets out and  
5 makes further observation in respect of the amenity and health  
6 concerns that were highlighted and identified and discussed at  
7 some length at the previous meeting. The reasons set out on  
8 pages 114-115, your officers feel, reflect the concerns that  
9 Committee expressed at that meeting. It would be remiss of me  
10 not to make it clear that we feel that there is some  
11 significant difficulty in defending a decision based on that  
12 reason for the very reason that Public Health Wales and the  
13 Health Board and our own public health colleagues within  
14 Rhondda Cynon Taf have not raised an objection on health  
15 grounds, but, as I say, Chair, the reason presented, we feel,  
16 does reflect the concerns expressed by Committee last time.

17 The recommendation is still that the application be  
18 approved subject to the conditions under the section 106  
19 requirement, as set out in the original report, but if members  
20 are still so minded to refuse, then the reason presented is  
21 put forward for your agreement. Thank you, Chair.

22 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Councillor Julie Williams.

23 COUNCILLOR J WILLIAMS: Thank you, Chair. I think you might guess  
24 what I am going to say, but when we went on the site visit to  
25 Albion Court last week both the chair and I stood and looked

1 across the valley and got a proper view of Craig Yr Hesg and  
2 we both said, "This is the best place to come and look at this  
3 quarry", you know, this site visit should have been there,  
4 "and it is absolutely huge." I will be voting to refuse  
5 because of the amenity and all the health things that go with  
6 it. I was amazed, as I think you were, Chair.

7 THE CHAIR: I was, you are right, Councillor Williams. It was  
8 amazing to see it from that vantage point. I entirely agree,  
9 Councillor Williams. Councillor Powderhill.

10 COUNCILLOR POWDERHILL: Thank you, Chair. I still am amazed to  
11 find that the public health bodies are saying there is no  
12 problem, when so many people are ill, the doctor in Glyncoch  
13 tells you they are ill. They do not hold records yet they can  
14 make that statement. I think that needs to be challenged.  
15 Mr. Bailey says we find difficulty defending it. I would find  
16 difficulty accepting it. I care for the people of Glyncoch,  
17 so, yes, I think it is absolutely right to continue with the  
18 refusal.

19 The other thing I want to ask. It is due to wind up in  
20 December 2022. What are Hansons doing towards those  
21 permissions, because if they do not get this extension --  
22 which I believe rightfully they should not -- they are not  
23 making any effort to wind down, they are just assuming they  
24 are going to get it. So I will be supporting the refusal,  
25 Chair.



1 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Councillor Powderhill. Councillor Jarman?

2 COUNCILLOR JARMAN: Thank you, Chair. Well, I think the cat is  
3 out of the bag now. I was very grateful to read that late  
4 letter, because I have had past experiences with the health  
5 board and the health nationally in Wales to say that they have  
6 been negligent in their duty. And I do not use that phrase  
7 lightly. When we were trying to establish the environmental  
8 effect on health in relation to the Nantygwyddon tip in the  
9 Rhondda, the same excuses came forward, the data was not  
10 available to look at the pattern of birth defects where babies  
11 were being born, clusters in those communities surrounding  
12 that tip, where the babies were born with their stomachs  
13 outside of their bodies at birth.

14 Then the health providers were making the same noises.  
15 They did not keep records to say whether they could persuade  
16 that there was an environmental effect on the health of those  
17 people living in the midst of that tip. I am reminded of the  
18 reclamation of the furnacing plant in Cynon Valley, and there  
19 the health impact assessment was undertaken by the health  
20 sector, because likewise they did not have the data to prove  
21 one way or the other, there were carcinogenics in that site,  
22 there was a high incidence of bronchial and cancer patients  
23 both working in the furnace plant and in the surrounding  
24 communities. But the health bodies did not have any evidence  
25 to prove whether there was an environmental effect. It is a

1 cop-out. They are negligent in their duties, in this day and  
2 age, that these particular illnesses cannot be collected on a  
3 database provided I find almost unbelievable. And I repeat  
4 ignorance is bliss, I suppose, would be their call.

5 They did not object because they did not have the data  
6 to substantiate an objection. They did not object because  
7 they know if they were put to the test by experts in the  
8 field, that they should have had that information and made an  
9 honest assessment of the effect of the dust emissions from the  
10 quarry. They have let the public of our communities down for  
11 too many years now and I hope that somebody gets a grip,  
12 because environmental impact on health is key. You know, we  
13 have lived in a heavy industrial area most of our lives and  
14 I cannot believe that here we are in the 21st century and the  
15 health bodies have not got a database of where these illnesses  
16 are and the industrial effect on their health of the  
17 extraction industry. I think they deliberately do not keep  
18 data, because they know the truth.

19 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Councillor Jarman. Councillor Bonetto?

20 COUNCILLOR BONETTO: I will not be changing my views. I will  
21 still be going for a refusal on this, particularly regarding  
22 the letter that has been read out to us and from the Health  
23 Board and everything. I think I would prefer to take a local  
24 GP's view on it, who sees the residents who are suffering with  
25 the chest conditions and so, no, I will be going with refusal.

1 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you, Councillor Bonetto. Councillor  
2 Grehan?

3 COUNCILLOR GREHAN: Thanks Chair.

4 A point similar to what Councillor Williams had, is that  
5 when I was at the top of the mountain looking over at the  
6 site, I don't think I had realised before how close Glyncoch  
7 is to this site and hearing the local stories rather than what  
8 the Health Board says, says there is local health problems,  
9 which persuades me completely to oppose this development.

10 Thank you.

11 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you, Councillor Grehan. What surprises  
12 me about this is that you would think that when consulted on  
13 these matters, the health boards would have undertaken some,  
14 the health structures would have taken some steps to try and  
15 elicit the information from the local GP so they could give an  
16 informed choice and an informed opinion when they are  
17 consulted with. So it does beggar belief, really, and  
18 I certainly would not change my mind as well as to how my vote  
19 would go in relation to this application.

20 I cannot see any other members who have indicated that  
21 they wish to speak. So, we will move to the vote.

22 MR. HUMPHREYS: We have not had a formal motion yet. Sorry.

23 THE CHAIR: Sorry, motion, please. *(Unclear due to overspeaking)*.

24 We have a number of motions! I am going to call officially  
25 for a seconder.

1 COUNCILLOR J WILLIAMS: I second that, Chair.

2 THE CHAIR: Thank you. We have a motion that has been seconded to  
3 refuse this application number 21/0720/15 for the continuation  
4 of quarrying and related operations at Craig Yr Hesg quarry  
5 Berw Road. So I go to the vote. I will first go to  
6 Councillor Julie Williams.

7 COUNCILLOR J WILLIAMS: I seconded it, Chair.

8 THE CHAIR: Councillor Powderhill.

9 COUNCILLOR POWDERHILL: Refused, Chair.

10 THE CHAIR: Councillor Owen. Not here. Councillor Lewis?

11 COUNCILLOR LEWIS: Refused, Chair.

12 THE CHAIR: Councillor Jarman?

13 COUNCILLOR JARMAN: Against the application, Chair.

14 THE CHAIR: Councillor Hughes?

15 COUNCILLOR HUGHES: In line with the motion, Chair, against the  
16 application.

17 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Councillor Grehan?

18 COUNCILLOR GREHAN: For the motion against the development.

19 THE CHAIR: Councillor Caple?

20 COUNCILLOR CAPLE: Refused, Chair.

21 THE CHAIR: Councillor Bonetto?

22 COUNCILLOR BONETTO: Refused, Chair.

23 THE CHAIR: Can you sum up there, please, Mr. Humphreys.

24 MR. HUMPHREYS: Yes. The members have resolved to refuse that  
25 application for the reasons set out on page 102 of the report.

1 Thank you, Chair.

2 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. Shall we just move on to the  
3 report for information. Are there any questions on the report  
4 members? Councillor Hughes?

5 COUNCILLOR HUGHES: Thank you, Chair, not strictly on the report,  
6 but on site visits. You will know that I am not really a fan  
7 of site visits. However, I always used to make every  
8 intention to attend those visits. It has been difficult to  
9 attend recently due to work commitments during the middle of  
10 the day and it is just a plea that we look to alternate some  
11 of those times in order to allow a greater attendance for  
12 members, because always at 10 o'clock or in the middle of the  
13 day it is very, very difficult for Councillors who work  
14 full-time. I just wonder, I appreciate that some of them can  
15 do that, but if some of them can be at alternative times that  
16 would be very much appreciated. And I will certainly try my  
17 best to attend when they are called.

18 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you, Councillor Hughes. Any questions on  
19 the report for information? Anything you want to draw  
20 attention to, Mr. Bailey?

21 MR. BAILEY: No, I do not think there is anything to highlight on  
22 this occasion, Chair, thank you.

23 THE CHAIR: Thank you. We have another committee now that  
24 thankfully Jess has managed to find another date for us in  
25 October, because otherwise we would be barely halfway through

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the agenda that we would have had to sit through today had we not found that additional date. Thank you very much, Jess, for doing that for us. I will see you all on 21st October. Thank you all.

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