

## Additional evidence from United Valleys Action Group in relation to the inquiry on the restoration of opencast coalmining sites

-Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council leaflet shared with local residents / 2003 Ffos-y-Fran land reclamation project.

**FFOS-Y-FRAN LAND RECLAMATION PROJECT  
WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?**

One of the themes we have discovered, in discussions with many local customers, is that many people did not believe they were adequately informed of the facts and the issues involved. This CONTACT Special Edition aims to clearly inform you of these issues and the enclosed response slip will allow you to give us feedback.

**The Project**  
The proposal is that Miller Argent would develop the currently derelict site at Ffos-y-Fran, situated to the northeast of the A4060, for the purpose of opencast coal extraction.

**The Issues**  
The issues are summarised below; in response to frequently asked questions about the proposal however, if you would like to find out more details regarding this project, we have organised four public information sessions, to be held at the venues and times shown at the bottom of this page.

**What will be the economic effects of the Proposal?**  
If the proposal does go ahead, there would be major economic benefits to the Merthyr Tydfil region. It would establish 200 new jobs actually on or related to the site and approximately 400 new jobs indirectly related to the investment. It represents around £50 million in after-tax local spending potential as well as income to MTCBC estimated at over £5 million (equalling 0.5% of annual council expenditure) thus reducing council tax pressure on customers.

**How much will the reclamation cost the inhabitants of Merthyr Tydfil?**  
The reclamation of this large tract of derelict land would be at no public cost. The plan also includes reactivating the currently not operational, freight rail link (that would cost millions of pounds to put in place) free of public cost.

**How much would Merthyr Tydfil inhabitants face paying if the project doesn't proceed?**  
The legal consequences appear very severe, leaving Merthyr Tydfil CBC liable to an estimated £15 million in likely costs. It could be more. That £15 million would require to be paid, and may require a special charge levied to all households averaging around £900 Band D per household.

**Has there been similar land reclamation in Merthyr Tydfil before?**  
This scheme represents the final phase of the East Merthyr Land Reclamation Scheme. Preceding phases demonstrate benefits of this scheme: both were closer to Merthyr Tydfil than the present scheme.

**If the proposal goes ahead, what would be the environmental effects?**  
Currently, this site is derelict, parts of which are filled with decades of rubbish, estimated at 235,000 metric tonnes of waste. This Land Reclamation project is an opportunity to protect residents from potential airborne or ground contamination removing all potentially hazardous waste, returning this derelict site into urban common ground.

**What are the health concerns surrounding the proposal?**  
This is the final phase of 3 Land Reclamation projects. Phases

icantly closer to Merthyr Tydfil town and local communities than Ffos-y-Fran. There is no evidence of any health impact as a result of Phases I and II. The geography of Ffos-y-Fran's location means that the environmental impacts on Dowlais and surrounding communities are likely to be felt less than Phases I and II. Ongoing environmental monitoring will assess parameters that could have an impact on public health.

**What about dust and noise?**  
During Phases I and II there were no significant levels of complaint relating to dust and noise. Ffos-y-Fran, because it is located significantly further from Dowlais and surrounding communities, is expected to have significantly less impact than might have been anticipated in Phases I and II. The Public Health department will work closely with Miller Argent to minimise impacts of dust and noise.

**How would the reclamation affect the Infrastructure of the area?**  
Upgrading of the currently difficult 'Bogey Road' bridge is included in the plan. The project will reactivate the freight rail link, enabling direct removal of coal from the County Borough, and would also be available for all businesses to utilise. The combined improvements of road and freight rail will enable that northeast part of Merthyr Tydfil to attract new business creating opportunity for a new business hub. The business sector has expressed an early interest in these major developments.

**What are the legal implications to the Ffos-y-Fran proposal?**  
MTCBC inherited a legal agreement in April 1993, for Ffos-y-Fran to be reclaimed as the last of 3 phases: Phases I and II have been implemented. There are no known legal liabilities (no costs) for MTCBC if this agreement is implemented. If this agreement is not implemented, legal liabilities (costs) for MTCBC are estimated at a minimum of £15.2 million. There is no known alternative other than this cost being passed on to Council Tax payers.

**Why would Merthyr Tydfil CBC be liable for these costs?**  
Merthyr Tydfil CBC cannot choose to ignore this legal agreement. It is bound by that agreement to proceed. Merthyr Tydfil CBC would otherwise be liable for the costs of cleaning up this site. The closest guide to this cost is at least £11.5 million. In addition MTCBC faces further recovery of costs estimated at £2.7 million. Further MTCBC liabilities include costs of a failed Compulsory Purchase Order, estimated at £1.0million.

**Ffos-y-Fran Information Sessions**  
The following sessions are being held in your community giving you further opportunity to find out the facts about the Ffos-y-Fran proposal:

- Monday 3rd November - 6.00 p.m. - 8.00 p.m.  
Treharris Community Centre, Perrott Street
- Tuesday 4th November - 6.00 p.m. - 8.00 p.m.  
Aberfan & Merthyr Vale Community Centre, Pantglas Road
- Thursday 6th November - 6.00 p.m. - 8.00 p.m.  
Dowlais Community Centre, Station Road
- Friday 7th November - 6.00 p.m. - 8.00 p.m.  
Rhydycar Leisure Centre

Any queries you may have about the proposal can be discussed at these information events or by contacting the Planning Division at Merthyr Tydfil CBC on: 01685 726283.