



ORMISTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Notes on Public meeting held by Ormiston Community Council in Ormiston Village Hall
07/09/09 @ 7.30 pm.

The meeting was opened Jim Blane, Community Council Chairman, who explained that the meeting had been called as part of the process to enable the local community to be made aware of the details of Scottish Coal's plans for Airfield opencast site. The principal speakers were then introduced and they were: -

Colin Ortlepp, Planning Director, Scottish Coal
 Dougie McKenzie, Chair, Communities Against Airfield Opencast (CAAOC)
 Donald Grant, Fa'side Councillor, East Lothian Planning Committee Member

Mr Ortlepp explained the area which they are looking to opencast mine known as the Airfield site. This area has already been mined underground by way of the Oxenford pit. This is still sufficient coal (approx 2 Million tons) in the ground to make it economical to mine by way of the opencast method. It is of the grade used by Power Stations such as Longannet & Cockenzie. Midlothian already has 1 site of opencast mining in which they have had no issues or complaints.

Scottish Coal is hoping to extract 2 million Tons of Coal over 6 ½ years that includes a 12-month restoration period.

Hours of mining will be Day shifts 7.00 am till 7.00 pm Monday – Friday & 7.00am till 1.00pm Saturdays.

It will be worked as what is known as Progressive re- instatement – an area worked & restored as they go along.

The owners of the ground have indicated that they wish the landscape to be restored to its original state.

The owners Oxenford Estate will benefit from the income from this mining activity.

The operation will employ approx 50 people of various skills – contractors will also be used. (Question was asked at this point whether it would be local people used or 'incomers'. The reply to this will be dealt with in the Q & A session at end of meeting)

The documents are available in the Library if anybody wishes to view them.

The village of Ormiston is 1.2 km from the site with some of the community being within 500 metres of the site.

Air Quality

Air quality will be monitored & the dust controlled by way of 'real time monitors'

Transport

The traffic is to be routed via A68 on to the By-pass & on to the power stations from there. The Lorries will not come through the village.

A legal agreement will be entered into with the contractors & if it is broken the driver will be barred from the site. Lorries will bear identification stickers.

The entrance road into the village via Limeylands Road will be left open.

Extensions

Scottish Coal is aware of the previous applications to mine in East Lothian and have no interest in the East Lothian sites. This application is not a Trojan horse to start mining in East Lothian.

The planning application is presently with Mid Lothian Council
East Lothian are consultees & personal comments should be made to the Midlothian Council by 30 September

The chairman then invited Mr McKenzie of C A A O C to address the meeting.

He explained that the group active in the fight against this mining application, is supported by all the neighbouring communities and has 40 active members & experts.

Local Plan – this application is a major departure from the local plan, which was lodged last December in which Airfield area was not an area of search. – There would be a presumption against opencast mining in an area out with an area of search. Midlothian Council might be prepared to allow the Airfield to be considered for opencast coal extraction if one or more areas of search proved to be non-viable, however even of this was the case the area of search attributed to airfield would only be about 1/3 size of the application site.

It is also against the Lothian Structural Plan also against Government guidelines by being 500 metres from a community.

The application is being snuck in by the back door – it does not meet environmental guidelines.
63 x 42ton Lorries a day

Pollution- diesel fumes from the Lorries & the equipment on site
Cockenzie has been labelled the dirtiest power station in Europe.
Increase in cases of Asthma, heart & lung conditions & Cancers are a concern
The ground underneath Cousland & surrounding area are already a honeycomb with previous mine workings what effect would the blasting have on the stability of the ground?

The landscape of the area is of great value, it is prime farming land & the area is used by visitors from the town as a form of recreation – walking etc.

There would appear to be no economic benefit to the area apart from the income to the estate.

Near by there is a stables which is looking to house horses for owners from Dubai, the dirt dust & fumes would be a disincentive to any new business ideas and there is talk of a retail centre in the style of the House of Bruar at Fordel Dean

This application should not be granted.

Donald Grant – East Lothian Councillor then spoke on how the planning system will work, with respect to this application.

The planning application sits with Midlothian who will make the decision.
East Lothian will be consulted but do not have statutory status i.e. an objection from them will not trigger a public inquiry

Calling in of an application is used sparingly and any complaints to be directed to John Swinney, Scottish Government Victoria Quay Edinburgh.

Ministers to be notified re consent if an existing community is within 500m of the application site.

Tynemount cottages are within the 500 m limit

Midlothian Council as a matter of course will consult statutory Bodies such as Transport Scotland, Scottish National Heritage, Historic Scotland and SEPA.

Planning issues: -

Environmental vibration & noise

The proximity of site to the community

Prevailing winds would mean that East Lothian (Ormiston) would be the most affected

Report to be prepared & submitted for October 2009, which is out with the time scale but should be okay. Decision to be made at the earliest November.

Duncan Robinson Midlothian Council dealing with.

The chairman asked if the other Fa'side Councillors present wished to say anything -

Ruth Currie (East Lothian Councillor) explained that she has been helping the Cousland group to build a case against the application.

There is cause for hope using Port Seton Coal road to Cockenzie as an example.

Presently there is a minimum of 48 Lorries on the road, which is not suitable & would not cope easily with an increase in Lorries.

NHS public health manager for the area has not been informed of this proposal and is concerned for the health of the community.

Mr Ortlepp interjected to say that the NHS was involved in the scoping exercise.

Mrs Currie went on to say that the Non-technical report is scant on facts but coal dust has adverse effects on asthma, cancers and other breathing difficulties.

It will be East Lothian view that is faced with a 'bing' but are unable to do what they want to do – work with councillors etc for a resolve of the situation.

Jim Gillies (East Lothian Councillor)

Has nothing to say apart from the fact that he's been fighting opencast applications for the last 16 years

At this point the chairman, Jim Blane, reiterated that the meeting had been called after the public display, by Scottish Coal, to make the community aware of what the application involves.

Details are also available in the library & Mid Lothian Council's website

The Community Council will carry out a survey of the whole community including 54 address's outwith the boundary of the village. 928 households in all & will act accordingly with the communities wishes.

The chairman said that the Community Council had not formally reached a view with respect to the detailed application. However they have reached a view on two general points those being that the Airfield site is in not in an area of search and, as part of the community council area is within 500m of the site (Tynemount Cottages 430m), the community of Ormiston is within 500 m of the site.

Questions: -

Q. W Anderson – Ormiston

Mentioned the health study on the Dalmellington & Douglasdale sites

Are the monitors being used the same as those used on the Dalmellington & Douglasdale sites?

A. NHS Lanarkshire showed no increase in Cancer levels

The monitoring devices are to be 'real time' - sticky pads - & directional gauges for precipitators.

Q. H Scott – Ormiston Hall

Will the results of the 'real time' tests be published?

A. Yes Monthly & quarterly reports to which the public has access.

The Scottish government encourages good neighbour agreements & in organizations being more transparent.

Q. H Gordon – Winton hill Pencaitland

How are the particles deemed as dangerous? As one level could be okay to one person but lethal to another

A. Government set the limits and Scottish Coal will be guided by these.

Q. D Bolton – Cousland

Will you be using sticky pads as the real time monitors?

A. Real time are being used in detectors.

Q. I Cane – West Byres

What will be the location of the monitors & how quickly can we access information on the trigger machinery?

A. Various places including in the communities. They are set lower than the required trigger level.

Information could be made available locally.

Q. If work has to be stopped due to high levels of noise/pollution how long will it be before it is recommenced?

A. Hours if not less

Q. D Brydon – Ormiston

Ormiston is home to a brittle asthmatic, which is a life threatening illness that can be brought on very quickly by the slightest trigger.

A. Mitigation to reduce air quality impact.

Q. Are Scottish Coal aware of the reports that show the negative effects?

A. Normal reports are available

Q. Noise levels – the site will close to the community's burial site.

How will this affect funerals?

A. Unlikely to affect this area unless the wind changes direction

Q. W Anderson – Ormiston

Ormiston hears every thing even the fireworks from Edinburgh

Q. Who will be the main customer for the extracted coal?

A. Scottish Power – Cockenzie power station Long gannet

Q. How long will the coal extracted from this site last in Longannet power station?

A. 4 months

Q. Where would the jobs be?

A. Can't specify – locally is possible. The wage level is about the National Average

Q. K P Cousland

How can people with none of the required skills be employed from the local area?

A. People willing to retrain & people from other sites including trying to bring younger people into the industry.

Q. J S – Ormiston

Kelty Opencast about to finish will the staff from there not relocate to this site?

A. Depends on what is available locally

Q. P Leitch – Ormiston

The value of property is likely to reduce because of the proximity of the opencast will Scottish Coal be paying any compensation to counter act this?

A. No. It is expected to be a dip in prices of 5-7% for a short time

Q. S. Coombe - Ormiston

Transport: The road is not wide enough for the traffic of the opencast who will be picking up the bills for the repairs?

A. The Lorries will not be using the A6903 in East Lothian. A survey will be done before & after the operation & Scottish Coal will pay.

Q. R Baines – Ormiston

What will happen if the A68 is closed due an accident or some other incident?

A. The work will stop on a short term basis then follow the diversion given by the police. If the Police place the diversion through Ormiston the Community will be consulted.

Q. R Currie – Councillor

East Lothian is not in favour of this application but if it goes ahead what benefits are there to the community?

A. Community Trust funds – local council

Q. Will East Lothian see that?

A. Mid Lothian will receive the benefits

Kelty rec'd £1 million from the trust which was used to help / renovate local groups.

Q. S Gillies –Ormiston

What benefits will the community of Ormiston receive? It looks like Mid Lothian are getting the benefits with East Lothian having the detriments

A. None given

Q. Water treatment? With the old mine works the water will contain toxic salts where will this be going? It is situated next to the Tyne River which effects everyone in East Lothian. Ideal Fishing River. How would bad weather be catered for? This could turn into an ecological disaster?

A. The system is designed to treat & discharge the water in accordance with SEPA regulations

Flow balance – do not need to pump to keep within the site until the level falls.

SEPA will monitor on a regular basis – daily checking

Observation

M Liberton – Cockenzie

The coal road to Cockenzie power station is a mess how come Scottish coal is not addressing this situation

A. Scottish Coal should be sorting this.

Q. M Ramsay – Ormiston

What's to stop the empty Lorries returning through Ormiston?

A. They are to stick to the designated route on the by-pass & A68.

Q. JC – Ormiston

How are the employees protected?

A. Occupational screening & management per regulations

The chairman summed up, thanked speakers, all who participated and closed the meeting.