

# **CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **RIVER RHYMNEY TASK GROUP**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY 8TH JULY 1998 AT 3.00 P.M.**

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PRESENT:

Councillors:

J. Wood, P. Slarke

Together with:

Special Project Officer, Committee Services Manager, Principal Environmental Health Officer,  
Senior Legal Assistant (RA).

Also Present:

H.J. Prosser (Welsh Office)  
D. Stafford (Coal Authority)  
D.H. Williams (Environment Agency)  
A. Davies (Environment Agency)  
A. Robinson (Environment Agency)  
Simon Jackson (Chairman)

#### **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor T.J. Williams.

#### **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

In the absence of the Chairman, at the start of the meeting, it was agreed that Councillor J. Wood be appointed Chairman for this meeting.

#### **MINUTES**

The minutes of the last meeting of the Task Group held on 11th March 1998, a copy of which had been circulated to all present, were agreed as a correct record.

#### **RIVER RHYMNEY : SOCIO ECONOMIC ANALYSIS - DRAFT FINAL REPORT**

The group considered a copy of the draft final report produced for Hyder Consulting Limited and in particular noted the conclusions contained in paragraph 7.5 on page 34. One of the conclusions was that without additional remediation works aimed at addressing sewage litter and gross and general litter problems, none of the three recommended options ( option 1 'oxidation channel; option 2 'active treatment and option 3' aerobic wetland) provided significant benefits over their costs.

## **POSITION STATEMENT**

Following the presentation from Hyder Consulting on options for the remediation of the minewater pollution of the River Rhymney, it had been agreed to seek the views of task group members. The construction of an oxidation channel had been advocated as the preferred option although the consultants indicated the need for further laboratory tests to establish the rate of iron precipitation following oxygenation. Passive treatment in an aerobic wetland was an alternative, but at a higher cost. To provide additional information to support option 1 Hyder Consulting had recommended a river sediment survey at a cost of £3,200 and chemical testing of the discharged water at a cost of £2,500.

It was the general consensus that Option 1, although the cheapest, did not remove the iron from the river but merely changed its form. There were doubts about the efficiency of this method. The Environment Agency reported that they were moving towards new standards on the total iron content in rivers so they felt that Option 1 was a non-starter as the theory had yet to be effectively proved and laboratory work might be inconclusive in proving how the iron precipitation would react. This view was supported by all present.

Option 3 (Aerobic Wetlands) had significant cost implications and practical problems, i.e. where an area of about one hectare would be located to provide this wetland. The practical difficulties of piping or pumping the river water to the wetland was considered and it was felt that if this option were to be pursued then the wetland would need to be situated as close to the source of the problem as possible. The Environment Agency reported that Rhymney discharge was ranked No. 18 however, this could change.

The Council did not own land immediately adjoining the minewater discharge and due to topography pumping would be required. It was felt that at this stage the most useful further investigation would be to identify an area of land so that if funding became available in the future, the construction of an aerobic wetland would then be possible. There was some land in Council ownership at some distance to the south of the current discharges which would merit investigation.

The Group agreed that:-

1. The oxidation channel option should no longer be pursued and therefore there was no further investigation work required from Hyder Consulting on this option.
2. The Group accepted the Environment Agency's concerns about the viability of the oxidation channel and noted the potential change to the quality standard in respect of total iron content.
3. It was not necessary to consider additional funding for the oxidation channel as it was no longer felt to be the preferred option.
4. That further information was needed before considering whether the alternative option of the aerobic wetland was viable given the costs and other constraints and in that connection - Hyder Consulting be asked to finalise the feasibility study and to investigate the construction of an aerobic wetland on the site which had now been identified and to incorporate costings on this site in the final report.

5. That dependent on the feasibility of the land in Council ownership being used for the construction of an aerobic wetland, investigations be made into the potential acquisition of the other sites identified by the consultants. It was noted that the Council's Unitary Development Plan was currently in its consultation stage and identifying site(s) for an aerobic wetland should be referred to in the plan.