

APPLICATION FOR DISPENSATION –

Proposals for St Ives, Duffryn Business Park – under paragraphs (i) and (v) of the grounds for dispensation, to attend, but not take part in, public consultation meetings.

I have declared an interest in the above subject, after receiving appropriate advice from the monitoring officer of the Council, Mr Ian Medicott. The interest centres on the location of my home in relation to the site of the St Ives site.

As a result of this, I have taken no part - and have not been present in the Council Chamber – on the occasions when this subject was debated at the Planning Committee and at a full Council meeting.

My application for dispensation concentrates on my position in relation to being able to attend public consultation meetings which the authority is intending to call in relation to the plans for St Ives. I understand that there is doubt as to whether I can be present when plans are explained to the public by Biffa or officers of Caerffili CBC.

I fully accept that it would not be appropriate for me to speak at any public meeting because of my declared interest as this could be seen to be influencing the debate.

On the other hand, if I am not able to attend at all, this is putting me in a detrimental position compared to any non-elected 'ordinary' member of the public.

The subject has created a huge amount of public interest, including a petition containing around 2000 signatures, and I have had many approaches from constituents concerning various aspects. The fact that I may not be allowed to even listen in an impartial way to the case being explained and hear the concerns of members of the public appears to contravene natural justice and I feel would help to undermine public confidence in the conduct of the Council's business (paragraph i).

To quote paragraph (v) of the grounds for dispensation – 'the interest is common to the member and a significant proportion of the general public'.

To reiterate, whilst I fully accept that it would be inappropriate for me to comment in such a public meeting, I feel that it would be equally inappropriate for me to be banned from being present to listen to the proceedings of any such meeting.

I respectfully request the committee to grant dispensation for me to attend but not take part in any public consultation meeting called by CCBC or Biffa.