

**NEATH PORT-TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**ENVIRONMENT, REGENERATION AND STREETSCENE SERVICES**  
**CABINET BOARD**

**2<sup>nd</sup> December 2022**

**Report of Head of Engineering & Transport – D.W.Griffiths**

**Matter for Decision**

**Wards affected: Godre'r Graig**

**Design Options for the Remediation of Cilmaengwyn Tip above  
Godre'r Graig Primary School**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To inform Members of the results of Earth Science Partnership's work to investigate design options and produce budget estimates for works associated with the remediation of Cilmaengwyn Spoil Tip and for Members to agree the option to be pursued.

**Executive Summary**

2. The report outlines the remediation options and associated costs for the remediation of Cilmaengwyn Spoil Tip and its effect on the Godre'r Graig Primary School site. It should be noted for clarity that this report is not part of the wider review of the Swansea Valley Schools, which is due to take place in the near future.

**Background**

3. Inspection of historic Ordnance Survey plans dating from 1877 indicates the overall site to have initially developed with the formation of two small quarries, one named Cwar Pentwyn and the other unnamed and described as an 'old quarry'. A mine entry (adit) is shown

as an 'old coal level' at the southwest corner of Cwar Pentwyn with a small spoil tip immediately adjacent. Mounds of quarry waste are shown to the south and east of both quarries.

The 1898 plan shows Cwar Pentwyn to have expanded slightly, with a corresponding increase in spoil tip mounds to the south and east. Both quarries appear to be disused on the 1918 Edition plan, with Godre'r Graig School having been constructed during the period between surveys.

The spoil tip to the east is the problematic one above the school. The majority of the land on which this tip is on, is in the ownership of Neath Port Talbot CBC and is registered on the same Land Registry Title as the school. The other tips within this complex are on privately owned land.

A report was presented to the Streetscene and Engineering Cabinet Board on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021 seeking permission to direct award Earth Science Partnership work to investigate design options and produce budget estimates for works associated with the remediation of Cilmaengwyn Spoil Tip. The results of that work are contained within this Cabinet Board Report.

### Remedial Options

4. In June 2021 ESP were asked to investigate design options and produce budget estimates for works associated to the tip, to include, but not limited to:

Option 1 - The development of a design and production of a budget estimate for the removal of the spoil materials associated with Cilmaengwyn Godre'r Graig tip.

Option 2 - The development of a design and production of a budget estimate for a hard engineering solution in the form of bunds, catch walls etc., to protect Godre'r Graig Primary School from the slip of any spoil material associated with Cilmaengwyn Godre'r Graig Tip; and

Option 3 - The development of a design and production of a budget estimate for demolition of Godre'r Graig Primary School building and reusing as a biodiversity habitat site. This option will have to take into

account the effect on properties downhill of the school from the slip of any spoil material associated with Cilmaengwyn Godre'r Graig Tip.

The full Earth Science Partnership Tip Remediation Assessment Report ESP.7234e.04.3564 is attached in Appendix A.

The detailed advice for each of the three options which includes risk and costs is as follows:

#### Option 1 - Removal of Quarry Spoil Tip

5. This option would involve the design and removal of approximately 90,000m<sup>3</sup> of material. The work would take a couple of years and entail a large number of truck movements on the public highway through our communities with a budget estimate of circa £6.1m. NPT would also have to enter into negotiations with a number of private land owners to agree access for the vehicles needed to remove the material, this option will remove the risk.

There are also major concerns about the ability to obtain licences from Natural Resources Wales as the material is classified as waste and would need to be disposed of in a licensed tipping facility.

#### Option 2 - Engineered Structure

6. This option would involve the construction of a retaining structure above the school would be designed to catch any falling material. The work would take up to two years to complete and the budget estimate is £1.4m. NPT would also have to enter into negotiations with a number of private land owners to agree purchase & access rights for construction. This option would not remove the risk which would require on-going monitoring and management.

#### Option 3 - Demolition of School

7. This option would involve the demolition of the school building, however the site will not be suitable for re-use in terms of a community benefit. As part of this work the area will be remediated and landscaped into biodiversity habitat with a bund formed to protect the properties downhill of the school from any slip materials. The work would take an estimated 6 months to complete with a budget estimate of circa £245K.

There would also be a need to improve the drainage system in the land below the tip structure. This work would take an estimated 3 months to complete, the budget estimate circa £150K.

### **Financial Impact**

8. Option 1 will cost £6.1M+
- Option 2 will cost £1.4M + Ongoing maintenance & Inspection costs (circa £10K/year)
- Option 3 will cost £395K + ongoing maintenance of drainage system (circa £2.5K/year)

The budget estimates are indicative and based on a report dated August 2021. Given the current rate of inflation there has been a substantial increase in the cost of Civil Engineering Projects in recent months.

There is £100k funding available for 2022/23 from Welsh Government to fund the design and construction of the drainage improvements recommended by the independent consultants and this is currently being utilised for this purpose.

Further Welsh Government have been approached to discuss the potential funding of the Options and have advised that Option 1, Tip removal could not be funded in the context of the number of tips across Wales, which is deemed to be unaffordable.

Welsh Government have advised that there may be grant available in future years to fund option 2 or 3 subject to the Councils decision.

At this stage as funding is not guaranteed, the work would need to be funded from the Council's Corporate Contingency Reserve.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment**

9. A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The first stage assessment, attached at Appendix B, has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. A full impact assessment is not required, as the proposed remediation works will provide a benefit to the Community.

### **Valleys Community Impacts**

10. Option 1 would remove the risk.

Option 2 the risk and hazard will remain, but mitigation work undertaken as set out in Earth Science Partnership report.

Option 3 the risk would remain, mitigation work undertaken would enhance the local environment and protect properties downhill of the school. Whilst the site cannot be reused as a community resource because it will still be in a risk zone from any debris slide and can be remodelled to provide a biodiversity habitat.

### **Workforce Impacts**

11. There are '**No Implications**' associated with this report.

### **Legal Impacts**

12. There are '**No Implications**' associated with this report.

### **Risk Management Impacts**

13. Option 1 would remove the hazard and the risk.

Options 2 & 3 the hazard would remain but mitigation work undertaken to reduce the risk from tip spoil flow.

It should be noted that the Earth Science Partnership Report in January 2021 – Godre'r Graig Village Land Stability Summary (<https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/16385/esp7234e7372e3451-godrer-graig-land-stability-summary-jan21-rev1-190121.pdf?v=20211116162713>) stated that the land above the school "may be, or has become, actively unstable; downward continuous and/or intermittent movements have been recorded via inclinometers".

Recent monitoring has recorded further movement in the vicinity of the tip.

### **Other Impacts**

14. There are '**No Implications**' associated with this report.

### **Crime and Disorder Impacts**

15. There are '**No Implications**' associated with this report.

### **Counter Terrorism Impacts**

16. There are '**No Implications**' associated with this report.

### **Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence**

17. There are '**No Implications**' associated with this report.

### **Consultation**

18. Local Members and the Godre'r Graig Board of Governors and Head Teacher have been briefed on the options report. The report was published on the Councils website and a letter drop undertaken advising the community of the report. In addition two on-line resident engagement briefings were facilitated to explain the options report to the local community.

Questions and answers from the online residents' meeting held on the 1st November 2021 are in Appendix C or on the Council's Website at <https://www.npt.gov.uk/33058>

Questions and answers from the online residents' meeting held on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022 are in Appendix D or on the Council's Website at <https://www.npt.gov.uk/33059>

A further public meeting was held at the Godre'r Graig Working Men's Club on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022. Several questions were raised in the meeting, responses sent and published on the Councils website <https://www.npt.gov.uk/34365> and are included in Appendix E

If option 3 is implemented prior to any demolition works commencing the Local Members, School Staff & members of the community and historical societies will be contacted to see if there are any historical or sentimental items that need to be removed or re-sited.

## **Recommendations**

19. Having due regard to the Integrated Impact Screening Assessment it is recommended that:

Members approve Option 3 to be implemented to manage the risk and improve the local environment, with the cost to be funded from the Council's Corporate Contingency Reserve, or via any future Welsh Government funding that becomes available.

## **Reason for Proposed Decision**

20. To manage the risks and liabilities associated with spoil tip debris flow at the site, as this is the only affordable solution available to the council.

## **Implementation of Decision:**

21. The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

## **Appendices**

22. Appendix A – Earth Science Partnership - Tip Remediation Assessment Report ESP.7234e.04.3564.
23. Appendix B – Integrated Impact Assessment.
24. Appendix C - Q&As from online residents' meeting - 1st November 2021
25. Appendix D - Q&As from online residents' meeting - 31st January 2022
26. Appendix E - Q&As submitted in writing following Public Meeting - 8th November 2022

## **Background Papers**

27. 30th August 2019 - Godre'r Graig Preliminary Hazard and Risk Report 7234e.3221.

B1 - 25th February 2020 – Godre'r Graig Primary School – Preliminary Investigation and Additional Assessment 7234e.02.3302

B2 - 16th March 2020 - An Executive Summary of this report was prepared: Godre'r Graig Primary School Executive Summary; Preliminary Landslide and Risk Assessment – 7234e.02.3339, March 2020

C1 - 26th February 2020 - Godre'r Graig Village Preliminary Hazard and Risk Assessment – 7372e.3337

C2 - August 2020 - An Executive Summary of this report was prepared: Godre'r Graig Village Executive Summary; Preliminary Landslide and Risk Assessment – 7372e.3394, dated August 2020

19th January 2021 - A combined Executive Summary (summarising both assessments for the school and Village was prepared; Godre'r Graig Village, Land Stability Summary – 7372e.3451.

## **Officer Contact**

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