

S.73 APPLICATION TO VARY CONDITIONS 3 AND 4

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT ADDENDUM

CHAPTER 8: TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

**Ffos-y-Fran Land Reclamation Scheme, East of Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 4AE**

Merthyr (South Wales) Limited

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8.1.0 Introduction

S.73 Application Context

- 8.1.1 Planning permission for the operational surface coal mine at Ffos-y-Fran was originally granted under planning permission ref. A-PP 152-07-014 ('the original application'). The description of development was as follows:

"Application by Miller Argent (south Wales) Limited for the Ffos-y-Fran Land Reclamation Scheme, incorporating the extraction of coal by open cast methods, and being the final phase of the east Merthyr Reclamation Scheme."

- 8.1.2 The above permission was subsequently varied under a S.73 planning application (application ref. P/08/0316) which sought consent for:

"[The] Variation of condition 37 of planning permission A-PP 152-07-014 to permit the limited dispatch by road of up to 5% of the annual output of coal from the Ffos-y-Fran land reclamation scheme or a maximum of 50,000 tonnes of coal per annum (whichever is the lesser) via Cwmbargoed Disposal Point."

- 8.1.3 The application was refused by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council but the proposals were subsequently allowed at Appeal (Appeal ref. APP/U6925/A/10/2129921). The Appeal Decision was issued by an appointed Inspector on the 11th of March 2011 and contained a comprehensive list of updated conditions, thereby superseding the original planning permission for the site as detailed above (permission ref. A-PP 152-07-014).

- 8.1.4 The purpose of this S.73 application is to allow for an extension to the lifespan of the mine. As such, the application seeks to vary the following conditions as contained within Appeal ref. APP/U6925/A/10/2129921:

- **Condition 3** – "All coal extraction from the development hereby permitted shall cease no later than 06 September 2022"; and
- **Condition 4** – "Final restoration of the land shall be completed no later than 06 December 2024 and aftercare shall be undertaken for a period of not less than 5 years upon certification of completion of each phase of the progressive restoration scheme."

- 8.1.5 The S73 application, as submitted, seeks to extend the lifespan of the minerals extraction by a further 9 months. As such, the timescales stipulated within the above conditions will be varied to match this extended life span for the mine. No alterations are proposed to the extraction area or working practices at the mine as previously consented.

Consideration of S.73 Application

- 8.1.6 A review of the previous assessments has been undertaken in the context of the S73 amendment to determine the possible effects of the alterations on the local transport network with reference to key receptors.
- 8.1.7 The following information was submitted in support of the original application (ref. A-PP 152-07-014) for minerals consent at the site:

- Chapter 8: Traffic and Transport – Environmental Statement (2003); and
- Transport Assessment.

8.1.8 The following information was submitted in support of the subsequent S.73 application (Appeal ref. APP/U6925/A/10/2129921) for the alternate haulage option at the site:

- S73 Application Document; and
- Revised Transport Statement.

8.1.9 The above technical assessments have been reviewed in the undertaking of this Environmental Statement Addendum and the findings contained herein.

Purpose and Structure of Chapter

8.1.10 This chapter of the Environmental Statement Addendum (ESA) considers the impact of the proposed material amendments on the transport network with consideration for planning policy and the context of the area.

8.1.11 Following this introduction, the remainder of this Transport chapter considers:

- Methodology – provides an overview of the assessment methodology as guided by planning policy;
- Changes in Baseline Conditions – summarises the baseline conditions at the time of the original ES and any subsequent changes;
- Assessment of Effects – details the original assessment of effects and whether there are any areas requiring further consideration;
- Requirement for Additional Mitigation or Monitoring – provides a summary of any potential mitigation required beyond that within the original ES;
- Residual Effects – details any effects that may remain after mitigation;
- Other Environmental Issues – summarises considerations and environmental effects with regard to wider topic areas;
- Summary of Effects – provides a summary of the effects of the proposals; and
- Conclusions – concludes the transport chapter of this ESA.

8.2.0 Methodology

- 8.2.1 This Section provides an overview of the assessment methodology as guided by planning policy and guidance.

Changes in Legislation, Guidance and Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 8.2.2 The most recent iteration of the NPPF was adopted in July 2021 having initially been adopted in March 2012. The document was prepared to provide a more streamlined approach consolidating previous Planning Policy Statements, Planning Policy Guidance Notes and various circulars.
- 8.2.3 The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development prioritising travel on foot, cycle or by public transport ahead of the private vehicle. In particular, it is stated that development should ensure that

- *“Appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location; and,*
- *Any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.”*

- 8.2.4 Furthermore, it is included at paragraph 111 that:

“Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.”

- 8.2.5 Within the NPPF consideration is made to oil, gas and coal exploration and extraction. Of particular relevance it is stated within paragraph 217 that:

“Planning permission should not be granted for the extraction of coal unless:

- a) the proposal is environmentally acceptable, or can be made so by planning conditions or obligations; or,*
- b) if it is not environmentally acceptable, then it provides national, local or community benefits which clearly outweigh its likely impacts (taking all relevant matters into account, including any residual environmental impacts).”*

Guidelines for the ‘Environmental Assessment of Road Traffic’ - Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (IEMA)

- 8.2.6 Whilst unchanged from the original ES, it is important to highlight the IEMA Guidelines for the Environmental Assessment of Road Traffic. Of particular relevance, the IEMA guidelines include criteria for determining the scope of study areas which should incorporate the following:

- Highway links where traffic flows are predicted to increase by more than 30% or where HGV

numbers are expected to increase by more the 30%

- Any specifically sensitive areas where the traffic flows are expected to increase by 10% or where HGV numbers are expected to increase by more than 10%

Assessment Methodology

8.2.7 The site was supported by an ES as part of the original application (the 'original ES'). A subsequent S73 application allowing for a higher quantum of coal to be transported by road was accompanied by a Transport Statement (TS) assessing the potential impact of the alteration. The remainder of this section therefore summarises the assessment methodology with consideration for the original ES and subsequent TS.

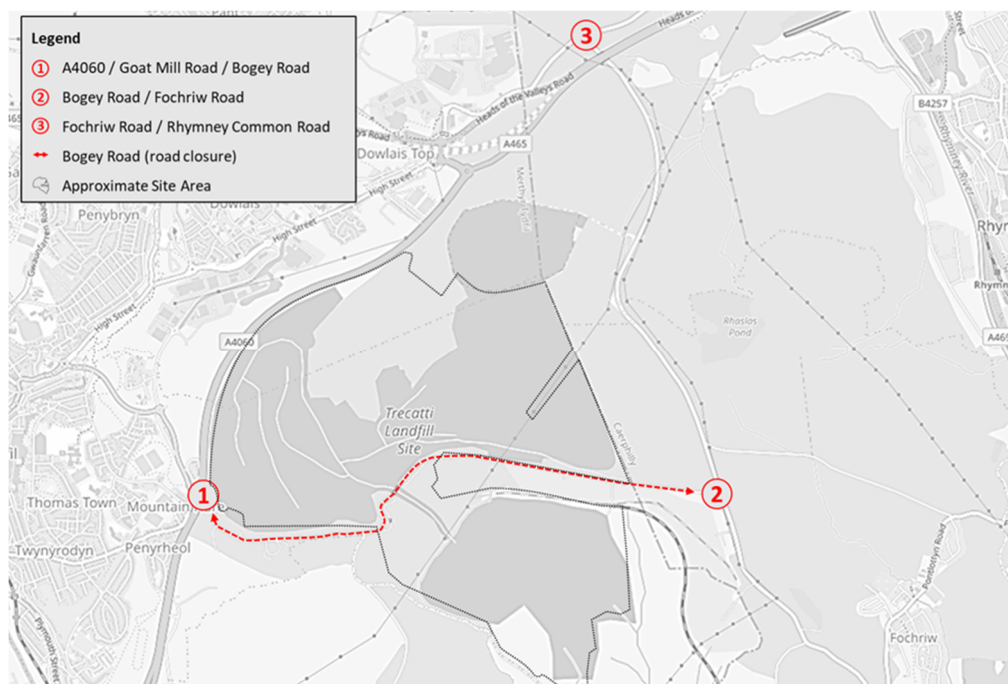
Study Area

8.2.8 The study area has been determined with reference to the original ES and TS associated with the S73 application. In addition, consideration has been made to the IEMA 'Guidelines for the Environmental Assessment of Road Traffic' to ensure that the environmental impacts arising due to predicted changes in traffic levels from the site are appropriately addressed.

8.2.9 With consideration for the above, the study area is illustrated below and comprises the following:

- A4060 / Goat Mill Road / Bogey Road roundabout junction;
- Bogey Road / Fochriw Road priority junction;
- Fochriw Road / Rhymney Common Road priority junction; and
- Bogey Road (road closure)

Figure 8-1: Traffic and Transport Study Area



Sensitivity Criteria

- 8.2.10 The table below sets out the sensitivity criteria that has been used to identify the magnitude of change in relation to transport and access issues.

Table 8-1: Sensitivity Criteria

Sensitivity	Definition
High	Changes which are likely to significantly change conditions which would otherwise prevail to the extent that it would significantly affect travel behaviour.
Medium	Changes which are likely to be perceptible and which would materially change conditions which would otherwise prevail to the extent that it would affect travel behaviour to a measurable degree.
Low	Changes which are likely to be perceptible but not to an extent that it would materially change conditions which would otherwise prevail to the extent that there would be a minimal effect on travel behaviour.
Negligible	Changes which are unlikely to be perceptible to the extent that there would be a negligible effect on travel behaviour.

Magnitude of Change (Impact)

- 8.2.11 The table below outlines the terms that have been used to define the significance of the effects identified and applied to effects.

Table 8-2: Magnitude of Change (Impact)

Magnitude	Criteria	Definition
High	Results in major and lasting exacerbation of risk	Fundamental changes to the transport network, generally considered to be a change in flow of more than 60%, resulting in higher risk and impacting on highway safety.
Medium	Results in exacerbation of risk	Short to medium term changes to the transport network that have the potential to impact safety. Considered to be a change in flow of 30-60%.
Low	Results in minor exacerbation of risk	Short to medium term changes to the transport network that that are not likely to impact safety, generally considered to be a change in flow of 10-30%.
Negligible	No impact to risk or level of change not significant.	Short to medium term changes that may result in changes to the operation of the network, but would be difficult to quantify. Generally considered to be a change in flow of less than 10%.

Significance of Effect

- 8.2.12 With consideration for the sensitivity criteria and magnitude, a significance of effect matrix has been determined, this is summarised below.

Table 8-3: Significance of Effect

Magnitude of Effect	Sensitivity of Receptor				
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
	High	Substantial / Major	Substantial / Major	Moderate	Neutral / Negligible
	Medium	Substantial / Major	Moderate	Minor	Neutral / Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Minor	Minor	Neutral / Negligible
	Negligible	Neutral / Negligible	Neutral / Negligible	Neutral / Negligible	Neutral / Negligible

Mitigation Hierarchy

- 8.2.13 The following mitigation hierarchy will be utilised when considering the potential impacts of the site on the local network:
- Avoid – where possible any negative effects will be avoided through means such as scheduling of vehicle trips.
 - Reduce – any negative effects that cannot be avoided will be reduced through means such as operational controls.
- 8.2.14 Both of the above mitigation opportunities were included in the Transport Statement submitted in support of the previous S73 application (Planning Ref. 10/00010/REF).

Effects Not Requiring Further Assessment

- 8.2.15 IEMA Guidelines outline a range of effects that should be considered with regard to transport. These are summarised below:
- Pedestrian Severance;
 - Pedestrian delay;
 - Pedestrian amenity;
 - Fear and Intimidation;
 - Driver delay; and
 - Accidents and safety

Pedestrian Severance

- 8.2.16 Severance is the perceived barrier to pedestrian movements caused by either traffic or physical barriers created by the road itself. The greater the volume of traffic on a road, the greater the level of severance. As no change to the operational procedures is proposed, it is not expected that there would be any change to vehicular trips associated with the mine. On that basis, no further assessment of pedestrian severance is considered necessary.

Pedestrian Delay

- 8.2.17 IEMA Guidelines state that changes in traffic volume, speed or composition may impact the ability of pedestrians to cross the highway. As with severance, the increase of traffic volumes result in an increase in pedestrian delay. As no change to the operational procedures is proposed, it is not expected that there would be any change to vehicular trips associated with the mine. On that basis, no further assessment of pedestrian delay is considered necessary.

Pedestrian Amenity

- 8.2.18 IEMA Guidelines define pedestrian amenity as the relative pleasantness of a journey. This relates to the provision of pedestrian facilities along a route, including, but not limited to, paving, lighting, width of footpaths, and traffic volumes and composition. No change to the pedestrian environment or operational vehicle trips is proposed and therefore no further assessment of the effect of the extension on pedestrian amenity is considered necessary.

Fear and Intimidation

- 8.2.19 Pedestrian fear and intimidation also accounts for pedestrian facilities, such as verges, overlooking properties, street lighting, and the nature of the streets. Fear and intimidation can also be influenced by the level of HGV traffic. As with pedestrian amenity, with no change to the pedestrian environment or operational vehicle trips proposed no further assessment of the effect of the extension on pedestrian fear and intimidation is considered necessary.

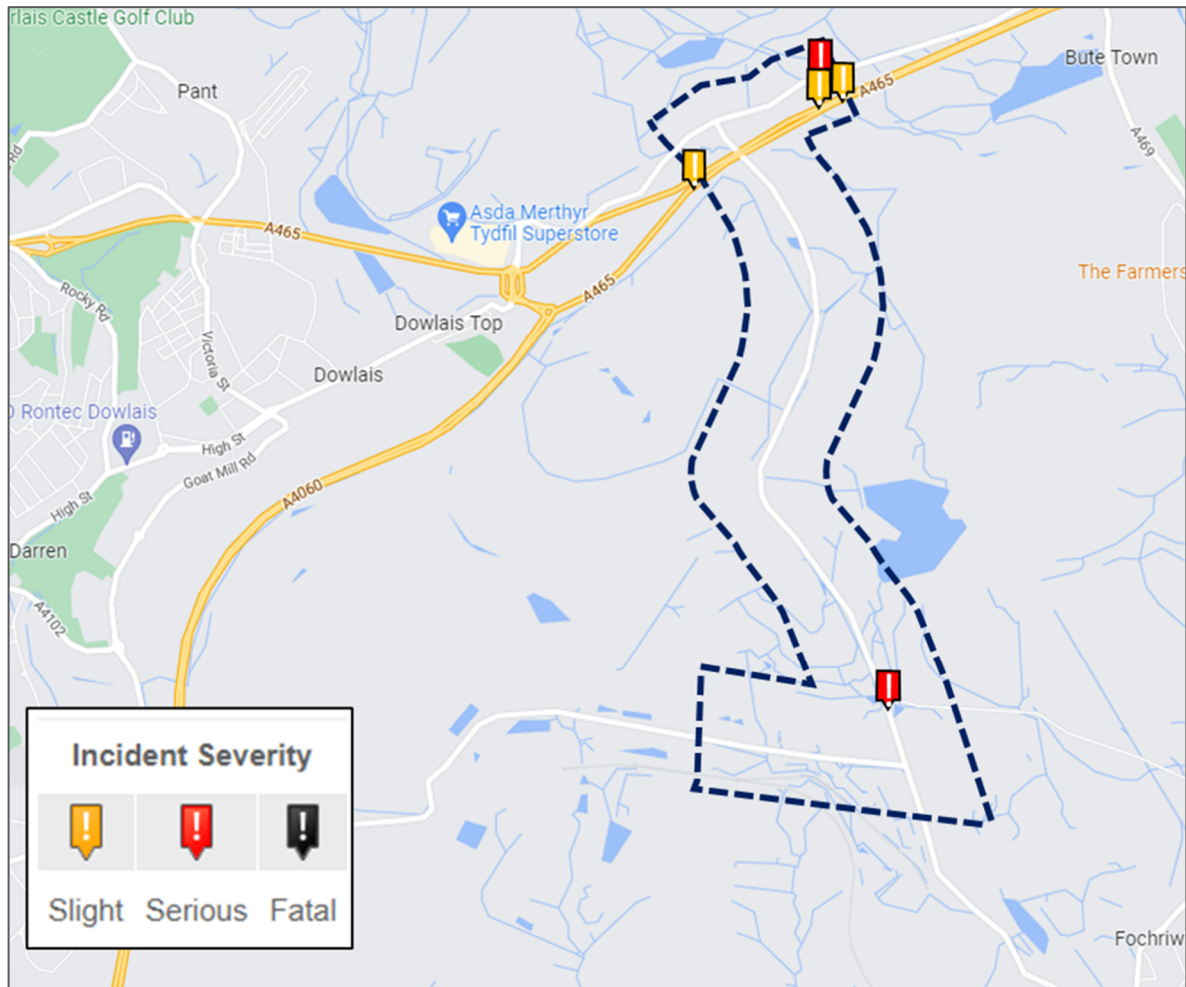
Driver Delay

- 8.2.20 Driver delay considers the change in traffic flows at peak periods and the resulting change in delay to non-development traffic. As no change to the operational vehicle movements is proposed, it is not expected that there would be a change in driver delay. On that basis, no further assessment of driver delay is considered necessary.

Accidents and Safety

- 8.2.21 With regard to accidents and safety, consideration has been made to the Transport Statement submitted in support of the S73 application and accident records within the document. In the period of 2002 – 2006 a total of 5 incidents were recorded within the study area comprising 1 fatality, 2 serious and 2 slight incidents. It was concluded that the mine operations were not having a material effect in terms of the quantity or severity of accidents in the local area.
- 8.2.22 The study area has been replicated for the most recent 5-year period with incident data obtained from CrashMap. The data indicates that a total of 5 incidents have occurred during the latest 5-year period comprising 2 serious and 3 slight incidents. This is shown in the extract below.

Figure 8-2: CrashMap Data



- 8.2.23 It is evident from the above that the increase in vehicle trips as a result of the approved S73 application has not had a material impact on that the quantity or severity of accidents in the local area. On that basis, no further assessment of the effect of the proposals on accidents and safety is considered necessary.

8.3.0 Changes in Baseline Conditions

Original ES Baseline

- 8.3.1 The baseline at the time of the original application was set out within Chapter 8 of the original ES which was additionally informed by a Transport Assessment submitted alongside the application under a different cover.
- 8.3.2 The nearest receptors to the site were defined as the A4060 / Goat Mill Road / Bogey Road roundabout and the Bogey Road / Fochriw Road priority junction. In addition, consideration was made to the impact of the temporary closure of Bogey Road.
- 8.3.3 The A4060 / Goat Mill Road / Bogey Road roundabout was not considered to be an overly sensitive receptor due to the expected traffic levels associated with the operation and the dualled nature of the A4060. Baseline assessments of this junction demonstrated substantial spare capacity should the mining operations not be undertaken.
- 8.3.4 The Bogey Road / Fochriw Road priority junction was not considered to be overly sensitive due to the relatively rural nature of the route and low levels of existing traffic. Baseline assessments of this junction demonstrated substantial spare capacity should the mining operations not be undertaken.

Original ES Future Baselines

- 8.3.5 The future baselines (2015, 2017 and 2019) accounted for the receptors outlined above and additionally considered the temporary closure of Bogey Road.
- 8.3.6 The A4060 / Goat Mill Road / Bogey Road roundabout was demonstrated to have substantial spare capacity following the inclusion of operational traffic.
- 8.3.7 The Bogey Road / Fochriw Road priority junction was demonstrated to have substantial spare capacity following the inclusion of operational traffic.
- 8.3.8 An additional sensitivity test was undertaken should mining operations extend until 2021 which illustrated that both junctions would be expected to have substantial spare capacity following the inclusion of operational traffic.
- 8.3.9 The closure of Bogey Road was a temporary measure required to install a new bridge and haul road. It was expected that traffic would be re-assigned via the A4060 and Fochriw Road. An impact assessment of the expected uplift demonstrated a minimal uplift in trips which would have a negligible effect on the local network.

Current Baseline

- 8.3.10 Department for Transport (DfT) data has been acquired for the local area to provide a comparison of background traffic growth compared to that forecast in the original ES. Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) flow data is available on the A4060 to the north of the A4060 / Goat Mill Road / Bogey Road roundabout for 2015, 2017 and 2019 reflecting the assessment years within the ES. Data is not available for 2021, however due to the Covid-19 pandemic, traffic flows would have reduced significantly during this period (2020-2021). Data is also not yet available for 2022, however this is unlikely to have increased above the 2019 flows, which are the highest forecast during the original

ES future year assessment period.

- 8.3.11 Raw traffic counts are available for 2016 to the north of the roundabout. To provide a comparison with the peak hour traffic in the ES, a factor to convert daily flows to morning peak hour and evening peak hour flows has been derived based on the raw counts. These factors are summarised below.

Table 8-4: Average Annual Daily Flow to Peak Hour Factor

	AM Peak	PM Peak
A4060 (north of roundabout)	11.85	10.98

- 8.3.12 The factor has been applied to the 2015, 2017 and 2019 scenarios. A comparison between the predicted future baseline within the original ES and the recorded traffic is provided below.

Table 8-5: Traffic Flow Comparison

A4060 (north of roundabout)	ES Flows		DfT Flows	
	AM Peak	PM Peak	AM Peak	PM Peak
2015	1151	1306	1085	1171
2017	1123	1331	1177	1270
2019	1149	1360	1190	1284
2021	1165	1382	-	-

- 8.3.13 The traffic flow comparisons presented above demonstrate that the future baseline flows provided within the original ES for 2015, 2017 and 2019 largely overestimated the level of traffic growth in the local area. Although data is not yet available for this specific counter location, we know that traffic flows fell significantly during 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid pandemic and the associated lockdown's / working from home conditions for many staff. As such the data, if available, would demonstrate that the 2021 baseline traffic flows would be significantly less than forecast in the original ES also.
- 8.3.14 In terms of baseline traffic growth in 2022 and 2023, data from across the UK is showing that traffic volumes are generally rising back to pre-Covid conditions. However, it is unlikely to exceed the peak volumes recorded in 2019 for some time, certainly beyond the 9 month quarrying extension sought here. As such it can therefore be expected that the two key receptors of the A4060 / Goat Mill Road / Bogey Road roundabout and the Bogey Road / Fochriw Road priority junction would similarly have been overestimated in the original ES and will continue to operate with suitable spare capacity today, as illustrated in the future baseline of the ES.

Changes in Baseline

- 8.3.15 As illustrated above it is expected that the key local junctions are operating with suitable spare capacity and minimal delay. As no operational changes are proposed, it is expected that the current baseline position would be unchanged by a 9 month extension to the extraction operation.

8.4.0 Assessment of Effects

- 8.4.1 The original ES considered the operation of two local junctions with regard to vehicle movements and illustrated that both would continue to operate with substantial spare capacity such that the operations would have a negligible effect on the highway network.

Additional Effects

- 8.4.2 No additional effects compared with the original ES are expected as a result of the 9 month extension to the operation.

Additional Cumulative Effects

- 8.4.3 No additional cumulative transport effects are expected to arise from the proposals when compared with the original ES.

Consideration of Original ES

- 8.4.4 The original ES defined the nearest receptors to the site as being the A4060 / Goat Mill Road / Bogey Road roundabout and the Bogey Road / Fochriw Road priority junction. It is considered that this assessment continues to be appropriate and that the expected effects of the proposals, as outlined within the original ES, remain valid.
- 8.4.5 The TS associated with the previous S73 works provided an overview of the expected transport effects at the Fochriw Road / Rhymney Common Road junction and concluded that there would be a negligible effect on the junction.

8.5.0 Requirement for Additional Mitigation or Monitoring

8.5.1 A summary is provided below of the transport mitigation outlined within the original ES, sequent mitigation and that associated with the proposals.

Original ES Mitigation

8.5.2 No transport mitigation was proposed as part of the original ES. Indeed, it was concluded that the proposals would not impose any additional impacts onto the local highway network and that the highway network would not be compromised by the traffic generated by the development.

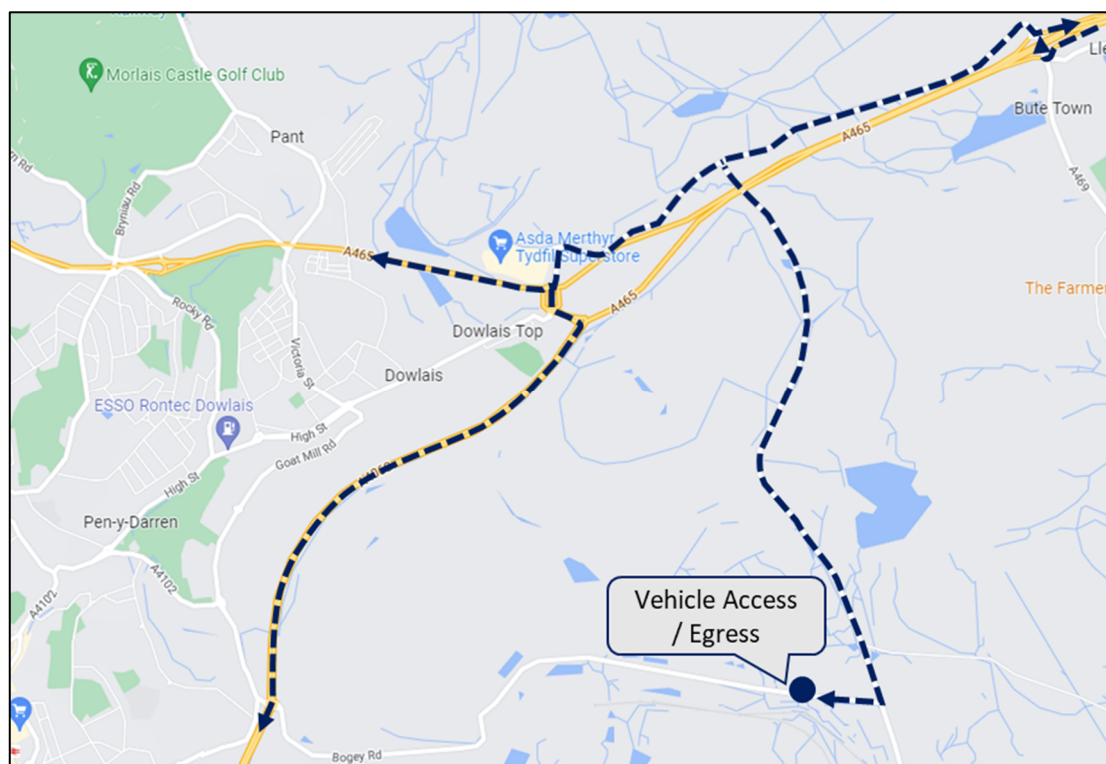
Subsequent Mitigation or Monitoring

8.5.3 As part of the S73 application a series of measures to minimise the impact of the removal of coal from the site via the highway were proposed. These can be summarised as follows:

- Vehicle routing plan requiring vehicles to access / egress via Bogey Road and Fochriw Road;
- All drivers to be registered as an employee of the haulage company;
- All drivers to receive the routing plan and a sign a form confirming receipt of the plan; and
- All vehicles to be adequately sheeted to prevent any spill of material onto the highway.

8.5.4 A copy of the vehicle routing plan as presented within the Transport Statement associated with the S73 application is provided below.

Figure 8-3: Vehicle Routing



Alternate or Additional Mitigation and Monitoring

- 8.5.5 No further mitigation beyond that outlined above is proposed to facilitate the extension to the lifespan of the extraction operation.

8.6.0 Residual Effects

- 8.6.1 The mitigation measures outlined within the application for the variation of condition 37 relate to vehicle routeing and have been implemented for some time. It could therefore be expected that there would be minimal residual effects following the implementation of mitigation particularly in the context of extending the lifespan of the extraction operation.

Consideration of Original ES

- 8.6.2 There were no residual transport effects identified as part of the original ES or subsequent variation of condition application. It is expected that this would continue to be the case should the operations be extended by 9 months.

8.7.0 Other Environmental Issues

- 8.7.1 This Section seeks to detail any considerations and environmental effects which have been identified with regard to the range of topics which have been introduced into EIA requirements through the EIA Regulations 2017. Where there are no such considerations or environmental effects, this is also specified below for clarity.
- 8.7.2 Please see Chapter 22 for a summary of the 'Other Environmental Issues' identified across all of the technical assessments undertaken and the Chapters prepared as part of the ES.

Other Environmental Issues of Relevance

Infrastructure

- 8.7.3 The A465 (Heds of the Valley) is undergoing a range of improvement works. To the east of the site the works comprising dualling of the route to Abergavenny are complete whilst to the west the section between Dowlais Top and Hirwaun works are ongoing with an expected completion date of 2025.

Waste

- 8.7.4 There are no considerations associated with waste with regard to the content of Chapter 8: Traffic and Transport.

Population and Human Health

- 8.7.5 Despite changes in the local population, traffic growth has been demonstrated to be below that forecast in the original ES and therefore no further assessment is considered necessary.

Climate and Carbon Balance

- 8.7.6 It has been demonstrated that traffic growth is below that forecast in the original ES. Furthermore a rise in homeworking and uptake of electric vehicles would be expected to improve the climate and carbon balance in the local area.

Risks of Major Accidents and/or Disasters

- 8.7.7 A review of accident data before and after the change in operations has demonstrated no material impact from the increase in HGV movements. As such, no further assessment is considered necessary.

Summary

- 8.7.8 The evidence presented within this chapter demonstrates that there is no material impact from transport on other environmental issues.

8.8.0 Summary of Effects

- 8.8.1 The original ES considered the operation of two local junctions with regard to vehicle movements and illustrated that both would continue to operate with substantial spare capacity such that the operations would have a negligible effect on the highway network.
- 8.8.2 A further junction was considered as part of the S73 application and was similarly illustrated to have suitable spare capacity such that the operations would have a negligible effect on the highway network.
- 8.8.3 An assessment of the predicted future baseline as presented in the previous applications has been compared with recorded DfT traffic flows and demonstrates that the original assessments overestimate traffic growth. As such, no additional effects compared with the original ES are expected as a result of the 9 month extension to the operation or subsequent S73 application.
- 8.8.4 No additional cumulative transport effects are expected to arise from the proposals when compared with the original ES or subsequent S73 application.
- 8.8.5 No residual transport effects identified as part of the original ES or subsequent variation of condition application. It is expected that this would continue to be the case should the operations be extended by 9 months.

8.9.0 Conclusions

- 8.9.1 This Traffic and Transport chapter of the ESA has been prepared to provide an overview of the likely impact of a 9 month extension to operations on the local transport network.
- 8.9.2 A review of the previous assessments has been undertaken in the context of the proposals to determine the possible effects of the alterations on the local transport network with reference to key receptors, namely local the following local junctions:
- A4060 / Goat Mill Road / Bogey Road roundabout.
 - Bogey Road / Fochriw Road priority junction.
 - Fochriw Road / Rhymney Common Road priority junction.
- 8.9.3 It has been demonstrated that the proposed extension to operations would have a negligible effect on the local transport network.
- 8.9.4 On the basis of the above, it can be concluded that extending the life of the mine by 9 months would impact upon the findings of the original ES.

REFERENCES

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) [2021]

Environmental Assessment of Road Traffic - Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment [1993]

Chapter 8: Traffic and Transport – Environmental Statement (2003) and associated Transport Assessment

Appeal ref. APP/U6925/A/10/2129921 - S73 Application Document and Revised Transport Statement.

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