

# **Villagers protest about plans for new recycling centre**

**More than 150 people living in villages surrounding a quarry have signed a petition to stop operators opening a new waste recycling facility in it.**

The NWH Group, who operate the landfill operations at Middleton Quarry in Midlothian have applied for permission to move recycling facilities from their Mayfield site, in Dalkeith, onto the quarry.

A meeting of Midlothian Council's planning committee this week heard the Mayfield operation was 'incompatible' with future housing plans for surrounding land and moving to Middleton would benefit communities.

However Moorfoot Community Council, which represents villages surrounding the quarry object the the plans saying operation at the quarry already cause problems for locals.

And they claimed locals had reported windscreens being 'smashed' by debris falling from heavy vehicles exiting the quarry.

During a pre-determination hearing on the proposals, consultant William Booth, speaking on behalf of The NWH Group, said the company's Mayfield operation was already under pressure with planning permission granted for new homes which would be as close as 50 metres to the site.

He said: "At such close distance the recycling facilities are

unlikely to be compatible with residential housing and, in this respect, to address the current concerns about amenity impact and future plans for the local development plan NWH is proposing to relocate to Middleton.”

He said the new site would allow for the closest property to the storage area where dust is most likely to be an issue to be 500 metres.

Mr Booth added: “The proposed move of the recycling plant from Mayfield is beneficial, it will reduce the current potential for impact at Mayfield and facilitate the development of the surrounding land in accordance with the local development plan.

“The relocation will allow the sustainable recycling of materials within Middleton Quarry void while ensuring an appropriate separation distance for all receptors.”

Making the case for the move to Middleton, which was a former lime quarry, he said: “The NWH group is a significant employer within Midlothian, it is a business in the circular economy. It draws a significant number of employees from within the local area and has been doing so for many years.

“This proposal assists NWH in securing the long term employment of a valued workforce.”

The meeting heard from Moorfoot Community Council that a petition with at least 150 signatures had been lodged with the local authority opposing the firm’s plans for the quarry.

Their representative said concerns had been raised about dangers at the junction into the quarry and increased heavy traffic.

She said there had been reports of near misses as HGVs leave the site as well as “several reports of smashed windscreens due to lorries kicking up debris”.

She said: "In drier weather the clouds of dust on this road are unbelievable and it does affect residents in the village.

"The amount of heavy vehicles from NWH has resulted on potholes and other damage to the road."

by Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter

