

Liaison group to monitor blasting at Lothians quarry

Concerned residents will form part of a liaison group which is being set-up to monitor blasting at a busy quarry on the outskirts of Edinburgh.

This follows decisions by the City of Edinburgh Council to approve an extension to Ravelrig Quarry near Balerno.

City councillors also voted to allow the operators to increase the blasting level, despite objections from local residents who are worried about the long-term impact, and an agreement of by the quarrying company, Tarmac, that no increase in blasting levels is necessary for continued operation.

Tarmac plan to start mining quarrying rock under a parcel of land to the south of the current site and Edinburgh councillors argued that material from the quarry was vital to help solve the city's current housing crisis.

Tarmac say that the quarry, which was opened in 1984, has almost exhausted the rock in its current location, and they told the city council's Development Management Committee that mining would have to stop "within a couple of years" if permission was not granted.

Balerno Community Council (BCC) will also be represented on the liaison group and Richard Henderson, chair of BCC, said that the group would aim to establish a shared understanding of key planning conditions, protect the well-being of the

local community and ensure that any development proceeds in a fair, transparent and accountable manner.

He also said that BCC recognise the importance of Ravelrig Quarry both locally and nationally and confirmed that they have been working closely with Tarmac and local residents over the past three years.

Henderson added: "We know that Tarmac have made a big investment in developing the monitoring processes which are helping minimise the impact of the quarry activities.

"We are very grateful for that, and we are also now working with Tarmac to develop a Good Neighbour Agreement in relation to future operation of the site."

As part of that process, a web-based system is to be developed to provide more public information on each blast.

Henderson added that the city council will attend any liaison group meetings if asked to do so and said: "The liaison group will be able to assist in the continuing work directed at further minimising any remaining nuisance."

Last month, Tarmac advised the city council that blasting operations, including in the extension, could continue to operate within the levels which applied until 30 April.

QUARRY SITE: general view of Ravelrig near Balerno. Picture by ***Nigel Duncan***



CLOSE UP VIEW: Ravelrig Quarry taken from the main gate.
Picture ***Nigel Duncan***