

The Rt Hon Thérèse Coffey MP,
Secretary of State for Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs

Date: 07 November 2023

Dear Secretary of State,

Staffordshire County Council's Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee has scheduled to meet on 20 November 2023 to consider the health impacts of Walleys Quarry Landfill Site, Silverdale, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, on local residents in view of the announcement in October that the environmental monitors have been mis-calibrated and that data collected since 2017 is flawed.

The Committee has requested that the Environment Agency attend in person the meeting to address:

- What has happened in respect of the environmental monitors?
- Do we now have access to reliable data about emissions from the site – and what is this data showing?
- Can the historic data be retrospectively recalculated to reliably calculate the cumulative exposure of local residents to hydrogen sulphide and other pollutants, given the exposure has been significantly greater than was originally indicated?

The Environment Agency has declined our invitation to attend the County's statutory Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny committee to share what it knows and answer questions in a publicly available and transparent way, so that we can use that information to inform the Health Security Agency to determine the health impacts, and so that Staffordshire residents can assess the impact on their physical and mental health.

The County's Health Committee is disappointed that a publicly funded body is not willing to attend our meeting to allow this committee to openly scrutinise the issue in a meaningful and appropriate way. The prospect for our committee to not be able to ask questions relating to our specific concerns undermines

many of the principles we all operate to in public life and I am sure is not something that can be condoned.

I would ask that the Environment Agency is requested at the highest level to engage with Staffordshire County Council's Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny committee and play an active part in an open and transparent way to provide the answers that we and our residents want. To do otherwise looks like a deliberate attempt to evade scrutiny and transparency and does little for public confidence or accountability.

I would ask that you remind the Environment Agency of its public role and ask that you urge them to reconsider attendance at the County's forthcoming meeting on 20 November 2023, as to host a health meeting in public where a publicly funded agency does not attend will only undermine some of the good work that is going on to control hydrogen sulphide gas emissions coming from the site.

I am grateful for your due consideration and support with the above.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Jeremy Pert
Staffordshire Health and Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee –
Chair
on behalf of the

Staffordshire Health and Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee

CC Member of Parliament – Aaron Bell MP
Chief Executive, Environment Agency
Chief Executive, Newcastle Borough Council & SCG lead