



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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Our ref: PO2023/21870/MP

9 November 2023

Dear Jeremy,

Thank you for your letter of 7 November to the Secretary of State about the health impacts of Walleys Quarry Landfill Site. I am replying as the Minister responsible for environmental quality.

Staffordshire County Council's letter states that they have asked the Environment Agency (EA) to attend to address a number of questions stated in their letter in a publicly available and transparent way, so that they 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 EA note that the answers to Staffordshire County Council's questions in the letter are in the public domain and notably were answered by the EA and its partners at the public meeting hosted by the EA on 9 October 2023. A number of Staffordshire County Council Councillors attended this meeting. Health partners, including Dr Richard Harling, Staffordshire County Council's Director of Public Health and Care, and Kate Spence, Deputy Director at UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), were also present and responded to the questions regarding public health matters. A recording was made available on the EA's [EngagementHQ](#) website and Facebook Group immediately afterwards.

The EA has responded again, on 8 November 2023, to the Council's questions to help health experts provide further advice. While the EA cannot answer questions related to health, they have committed as far as possible to respond to the questions raised in their letter, to support those who are appropriately placed to do so.

However, as the information requested is already in the public domain, discussed at the virtual event and discussed with partners at the multi-agency Strategic Coordination Group, the EA believe that Staffordshire County Council have all the information requested to inform their discussion at the Health Scrutiny Committee. Consequently, they have decided not to attend.

This decision was also taken in part because this is a health scrutiny committee, and EA staff are not health experts. Their concern is that any EA staff member attending would be subject to questions about health advice that they cannot answer. This is what has happened when the EA have attended in the past, which has helped to inform their decision for this session.

The EA remain committed to working with our partners to ensure transparency and clarity over the issue with the hydrogen sulphide (H₂S) air quality monitoring data around the Walleys Quarry Landfill Site. They are committed to keeping Staffordshire County Council and you personally updated on these matters.

I also note that Staffordshire County Council's Public Health team, UKHSA and the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board previously made a joint statement in regards to health impacts, available here: [Walleys Quarry - Staffordshire County Council](#).

Thank you once again for taking the time to contact us about this important issue.



REBECCA POW MP