

County Council Meeting – 8th February 2024**Question to Councillor Simon Tagg
Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate
Change****By Councillor Sweeney**

Question

The noxious stink from Walleys Quarry Landfill in Newcastle under Lyme has been causing distress and concern to residents in my Division and beyond for a number of years. In recent months it has returned with a vengeance with complaints from residents numbering into the hundreds since November 2023.

Can the Portfolio Holder confirm that Staffordshire County Council stands shoulder to shoulder with Newcastle Borough Council and local residents in holding the Environment Agency and site operator to account for their failings over a long period? Does he also agree with me that the landfill should be closed down, capped off and restoration be carried out to the site?

Reply

From the outset Staffordshire County Council has been adamant that our communities should not have to suffer the consequences of the operator's failings at Walleys Quarry Landfill while the Environment Agency tried to find solutions in its role as statutory regulator.

In June 2021 this Council wrote to the then Prime Minister Boris Johnson calling for the Government to take immediate action, using emergency powers, if necessary, to intervene on residents' behalf.

The Environment Agency remains the body responsible for regulating the site's operation and closing it if necessary. Since 2021, the County Council has worked closely with partners, including Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and constituency MP Aaron Bell, to press for the Environment Agency and the Government to act and bring this problem under control if the operator could not.

In October 2023 the Leaders of both Staffordshire and Newcastle Councils wrote to then Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs calling not only for a public inquiry into the Environment Agency's

performance at Walleys Quarry, but to investigate the wider issue of how landfill sites are managed, regulated and how the community may seek redress for the breaches.

That call remains and we continue to do all we can to support residents frustrated, disappointed, and angered by recent events.

As a local member I do agree with Cllr Sweeney that it is now well past time for the Environment Agency to issue a Closure Notice on Walleys Quarry Landfill.

