



Department of Health & Social Care

From the Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

020 7210 4850

POC_1327734

Sir James Bevan
Chief Executive
Chief Executive's Office
Environment Agency
Seacole Block, 2 Marsham Street
London,
SW1P 4DF

Chief.Executive@environment-agency.gov.uk

04 May 2021

Dear Sir James,

I wish to raise my grave concerns about the current situation at Walleys Quarry Landfill site, in Newcastle under Lyme. The current management of the site, as I am sure you are aware, in light of the Environment Agency's enforcement action, appears woefully inadequate, in preventing offsite emissions of landfill gases and associated odours that are blighting the surrounding communities. I would appreciate knowing of your assessment of the position on 30 April, which was the date by which the enforcement action needed to be implemented, and whether further action is required.

I am sympathetic with the distress and disruption suffered by the local communities who are being adversely impacted by offensive odours coming from the site, especially the impacts on the community's overall health and wellbeing.

My concerns about this site are based on the air quality monitoring data shared with PHE that has identified breaches of the World Health Organisation 24 hour guideline values for hydrogen sulphide for 2 days on the 7th and 8th of March, and a more recent assessment of the data where PHE state that "*although any risk to long-term physical health is likely to be small, we cannot exclude a risk to health from pollutants in the area. Short-term health effects may be experienced such as irritation to the eyes, nose and throat. Individuals with pre-existing respiratory conditions may be more susceptible to these effects*".

I understand that the Environment Agency is working with its local multi-agency partners, including significant support from PHE, to respond to this issue, however it is imperative that the Environment Agency both exercise the full range of their regulatory and enforcement powers over the company and, with Local Authority partners, engage effectively with the affected community to urgently resolve the problems at the site, for the benefit of the community's health and wellbeing.

Considering these significant and widespread concerns, I would appreciate further information on the EA's plan of action including timescales to resolve this situation.

I am copying this letter to Martin Hamilton, Chief Executive at Newcastle-under-Lyme BC and Aaron Bell MP.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

MATT HANCOCK