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PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

1. The following question has been received from Stephen Hornby:

What is the Council's response to the following statement: "In light of the Council approval of the toxic waste plant that is to be built on the site of the old gas works near Marley in Keighley, a baseline record needs to be set. This new industry will pollute the valley so we need to monitor it. Does the Council have environmental monitoring equipment downwind and upwind of this proposed monstrosity? If not I would like to see the pollution levels measured at the earliest opportunity and an investment in equipment to perform this task looked into. Then, when the incinerator is running, we can compare, and contrast, the output of the incinerator to the baseline measurement before the incinerator was operational. Presumably environmental monitoring was something considered by the Regulatory and Appeals Committee who approved this, and the expertise sought of Professionals in this field?"

Response

Within the report to the Council's Regulatory & Appeals Committee it was clearly set out who the relevant responsible bodies were with regards to air quality. It is the responsibility of the Environment Agency to monitor and control stack emissions through the relevant permitting process that they administer. The required Environment Agency permit will set appropriate limits for emissions to air, land and water and it is the Environment Agency and not the Council who will be responsible for future monitoring of any stack emissions to ensure compliance. The Environment Agency has advised that the permit will require continuous emissions monitoring and that quite stringent emission limits will be applied. Public consultation will be held prior to the permit being implemented and anyone wishing to be involved in that consultation can do so by contacting the Environment Agency through the contact details on their website.

Government guidance is clear, in that local planning authorities should focus on whether the development itself is an acceptable use of the land, and the impact of the use, rather than to seek to control of processes or emissions themselves especially where these are subject to approval under separate and rigorous pollution control regimes, such as those within the remit of the Environment Agency. When the planning application was considered Members attention was drawn to the relevant sections of the Government planning guidance on pollution control and what matters were the specific responsibility of the Environment Agency.

2. The following question has been received from Jean Mawson:

What is the Council's response to the following statement: "I live adjacent to woodland now known as Saxilby Wood which is managed by Bradford Parks and Woodlands Team. Prior to moving into the property in April 2014, I contacted Bradford Council (Mr Thorp) to ask for trees which are overhanging my garden to be cut back. I have continued to contact Mr Thorp and Mr Whitfield on a regular basis but to date nothing has been done. There are three trees in particular that are causing me concern, one of which having spanned 35 feet across my garden is now overhanging my roof. This tree is also making parking in my allocated parking space impossible due to overhanging low branches. It is also causing cracks to appear in the stone wall adjoining the wood. The other trees overhang my lawn with branches almost reaching down to the lawn itself making half of my garden unusable. There is a broken branch which is hanging precariously and will no doubt fall in strong winds. There are also tree roots reaching right across the garden which are very close to drains. I have been told that the Tree Protection Order covering the wood has now been lifted to enable work to be carried out on these trees. It has been suggested that I could carry out the work myself, however I am a single woman aged 62 and have recently undergone shoulder surgery so quite how I am expected to do this I don't know. The cost of engaging tree surgeons to undertake the work would be prohibitive. I believe the Council are being negligent in their duty to maintain the eastern edge of this woodland to a standard that is acceptable to residents living in adjacent properties."

Response

Saxilby Wood was transferred to the Council quite recently in summer 2014. We took on a commitment to maintain it as a public open space, but with no additional maintenance obligations to residents living next to the woodland.

We carried out a local public consultation and produced a Woodland Management Plan for Saxilby Wood which is now registered with the Forestry Commission. This has allowed the Tree Protection Order for the site - order 0153 - to be removed in 2015.

Annual tree inspections at Saxilby Wood have been carried out in 2014, 2015 and 2016. These regular inspections identify any unsafe or diseased trees, before more detailed tree inspections are also carried out where necessary. A detailed inspection of the trees alongside Mrs Mawson's property is being commissioned in line with the woodland management plan and it is expected to be completed by the end of August. It is anticipated that substantial tree removal will be recommended, although the detailed inspection will identify which particular trees are to be removed.

We will continue to keep Mrs Mawson updated on progress.