

**From Councillor Deborah Roberts to the Environmental Services Portfolio Holder:**

*“In the light of the public concern regarding unpleasant physical symptoms being experienced in and around Hauxton as well as the generally obnoxious odours being emitted day after day which are destroying the quality of life for so many residents of South Cambridgeshire and which goes against all the supposed values of SCDC will the council now take control of this situation, distance itself from the developers and their contractors, demand truly independent monitoring / evaluation, look at alternative methods of remediation that would not allow the airborne pollution to occur and thereby be seen to be acting in the public interest rather than as partners in the development of the former chemical works?”*

Thank you for your question. I am aware that there has been extensive dialogue between yourself and officers on the technical aspects of this site. Having read those communications, I believe that this Council does have control of the situation and are acting in the public interest to achieve the successful remediation of this site. Our officers are leading the multi agency group of organisations involved in the site that is working to ensure that all measures are put in place to minimise the effect on the local community. However, in order to do this, we must work closely with the site developers and contractors to find appropriate solutions.

The Health Protection Agency's advice, following review of all current air monitoring, is that emissions from site are unlikely to cause any health effects to the local residents. The human nose is very sensitive to odours and some can cause a reaction in individuals.

The Council has already taken all appropriate steps to secure the benefit of independent expert advice by way of a legal obligation creating a duty of care (collateral warranty) from both the Contractor (Vertase FLI) and the Consultants (Atkins). Atkins is one of the leading environmental consultancies in the UK. They have and will continue to act impartially and independently in their role as specialist consultant for the remediation works at the Hauxton site. They have a continual site presence to oversee the remediation work that Vertase are carrying out. Analysis of all samples taken from site are also analysed by an independent and accredited laboratory.

When assessing the remediation application, costs were not a consideration to the council. The application was assessed on technical merit and on the basis of whether the methodology proposed would address the significant pollutant linkages that exist on the site. Both the Environment Agency and this Council considered that the remediation methodology put forward, i.e. excavation and treatment, was the only method that would satisfactorily address the contamination at the former Bayer site. The soil material needs to be excavated because the contaminants cannot be effectively treated in the ground due to the geology and the nature of some of the contamination. The current methodology for the treatment of excavated soil is comprehensive and appropriate to ensure a solution for all material that may be found on site.

It has been suggested that tents should be used to minimize emissions during the excavation phase. This is one of the options that have been considered, however, it is only a practical solution for small-scale remediation work. The Bayer site is a 20 acre site with substantial excavations which are carefully excavated, logged, exposed to the remediation process and returned to refill the original excavation site, tenting is not practical or manageable on such a large scale excavation and therefore all other

best practice procedures have been put in place to minimise the odour created from the works.

**Supplementary question, asked at the Council meeting:**

Councillor Roberts produced a jam jar of water she said had been drawn from ten yards outside the site boundary wall, and asked if any Executive Members and senior officers would smell or taste it. The Environmental Services Portfolio Holder offered to have the water sent for analysis.