



Steve Reed OBE MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Our Ref: SC22270

17 July 2024

Dear Steve

I am delighted to welcome you to your new position as part of a Labour Government that I know will deliver for our country.

I have previously, and frequently, raised my concerns regarding the ongoing development of Droppingwell Tip in Rotherham with the former Conservative Government.

The Droppingwell site was formerly used for landfill and was closed, following an extensive campaign by local residents, in the mid-1990s. In the intervening three decades the site was restored to a natural environmental condition and is now bordered by a well-developed youth football facility and a world-renowned golf academy. The area is popular with dog walkers and environmentalists.

In 2016, the Environment Agency (EA) accepted an application for an environmental permit to resume tipping at the site, despite its extensive dormancy. No consultation was requested or made with either local residents, businesses or the local council. Indeed, the council was not even notified that an application had been made until after the permit was issued. Nor was I, as the constituency Member of Parliament.

Alongside, current and former local elected councillors, the local authority and local residents we have repeatedly raised serious concerns about the suitability of the site for landfill with the EA. Regrettably, these have not been heeded and the EA have declined to look again at their decision.

Since the permit was issued, I have repeatedly had cause to raise with the EA about the suitability of monitoring of the site. This gives me little

Sarah Champion
Member of Parliament for Rotherham
Moorgate Crofts Business Centre, South Grove, Rotherham, S60 2DH
T: 01709 331035
sarah.champion.mp@parliament.uk
www.sarahchampionmp.com



confidence that, should tipping operations indeed be resumed, adequate monitoring and enforcement of environmental regulations will be in place.

A significant problem has been that some, although by no means all, of these concerns fall under the remit of planning authorities. These include the traffic impact, noise impact and the impact of the development upon the community and in particular, adjacent businesses. Yet these issues have at no point been subject to scrutiny, due to the existence of prior planning permission. Permission was granted for the site in the 1950s and remains in force. The local area has changed beyond all recognition in the seventy years since permission was obtained and it is highly unlikely that, were an application to be made today, it would be granted.

It cannot be right that a site dormant for so long can be permitted to reopen with only the most cursory scrutiny on the basis of planning permissions issued before the majority of local residents were even born. That my constituents views and rights have been lost in this process shows the deep flaws in existing legislation.

Development of the site continues. It is only a matter of time before tipping will resume. Residents rightly fear the impact that this will have upon their quality of lives, their local area and, potentially, their health.

I have been informed that only intervention by yourself will stop the tip proceeding. I would therefore implore you to listen to my constituents and ensure that the permit is withdrawn. I hope that you will do everything that you can to prevent irreparable damage to the local community and to look to change this legislation so that no other area has to go through this horror.

I would be keen to arrange a meeting with you to discuss a way forward.

Kindest regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

Sarah Champion MP
Member of Parliament for Rotherham