

From: HC
Sent: 10 September 2013 07:29
To: ProgrammeOfficer
Subject: Re: FW: Agendas for next week

Hi

I have produced a briefing note for the Inspector.

The main issues are:

- 1) ORS are in the process of completing a Gypsy / Traveller Accommodation for the Essex Council's (with the exception of Basildon). This is likely to show that there is an acute shortage of sites where Gypsy / Travellers can live.
- 2) I have severe doubts that the Michelin Farm site can be delivered within the next five years due to funding constraints;
- 3) There is a probability that the site is more contaminated than expected and that any works will be problematic due to dust containing harmful particulate matter, and that works will be expensive.

This situation has arisen at the traveller site known as Dale Farm in Basildon where the Council exposed about 250,000 tonnes of what is heavily polluted material. Basildon Council failed to obtain the required licences from the Environment Agency and also failed to follow its site waste management plan. If these had been followed and the Council had actually obtained compliance with its enforcement notices there would be few problems. The Environment Agency will not now allow material to be removed from the site or moved on the site without the required authorisations, and have advised that people particularly children should not enter the site. The cost of remediation of the pollution exposed by Basildon has been estimated as being £40 million. There have been a number of deaths possibly at least partly related to the exposure of the pollution and children who live nearby have developed lesions at the back of their eyes (brain). It is understood that if the scale of the problem had been properly understood and if the Council had actually sought compliance with its notices that Dale farm would not have been cleared on environmental grounds. Basildon Council had £9.2 million made available to it by the Government to do the work through capitalisation directions and grants. The Council has identified that its cost of doing the work was about £4 million. Putting right the pollution will add about another £40 million. These costs exist due to poor (non-existent) management of their land restoration initiative by Basildon Council, its failure to follow its own plans, and failure to disclose that it did not intend to restore the land.

The costs associated with proper remediation of polluted sites appears to be expensive, and the work required to identify the status of any pollution is also expensive.

I am quite certain that making the Michelin Farm site safe is possible. However, the cost is likely to be substantial and require co-ordination and bidding from a range of different budgets. This is likely to cause delay in progressing the site due to demand on existing budgets to remediate pollution exposed elsewhere in Essex.

I apologise to the Inspector for not attending, and shall write separately.

Stuart Hardwicke Carruthers

