

Professor Trevor McMillan
Vice-Chancellor



Mr M Hamilton
Chief Executive
Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
Via email: Martin.Hamilton@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk

1 March 2021

Dear Martin

Re: Walleys Quarry Landfill, Cemetery Road, Newcastle under Lyme ST5 6SB

For many years we have been aware of community concerns around Walleys Quarry and complaints about severe odours and smells.

Historically the impact on the University has been seldom and relatively minor, but since October 2020 we have experienced a step change increase in the severity of what is an extremely pungent smell and the frequency in which it is present on campus. Clearly as a University, which leads the way in environmental sustainability, we are disappointed about what seems to be a continued growth in waste being deposited in to the site, but we now wish to highlight serious concerns that the quarry is beginning to impact on the University's business.

As well as being a Campus University, delivering world leading research and teaching, we also operate, in partnership with the Borough Council (NuLBC), the County Council (SCC) and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), the Science and Innovation Park which is designated as a University Enterprise Zone and is recognised as being the centre of high value employment in North Staffordshire.

Our concerns include:

As a residential site: with c 200 domestic residences on campus and over 2,800 student study bedrooms, these odours are now at a level where we are receiving complaints from both residents and students. This includes members of the University who have moved to campus in the last 6 months, had no prior knowledge of Walleys Quarry, and have already raised concern about an intolerable smell in and around their respective homes, which are at extreme ends of the campus.

The Science and Innovation Park: We continue to see significant inward investment, with the recent opening of a 150 bedroom Marriott Hotel, our new Business School and Incubation Space, and the commencement of the new Vet School and the Digital Institute. These and future developments, attracting over £30m of European investment sit at the heart of the recently relaunched Keele Deal, and should bring significant employment and wealth to the area. However, the continuation of the smell would put in jeopardy the strategic plan, which has been 15 years in the making and is a fundamental foundation stone within the LEP's plans for North Staffordshire.

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Teaching: As part of our regional business plan, Keele University is several years into a Strategic Growth Plan, which, despite a reducing demographic, has continued to grow our student population over the last 5 years, with 2019/20 being our largest student intake ever. Much of the growth is supported by a series of Open Days and Offer Holder Days, where prospective students (and their families) are able to visit the campus and to gain a real understanding of what Keele Campus and the surrounding area has to offer. We have a serious concern that any odour on campus would have an adverse effect on our visitors and hence the reputation of the university.

I am therefore writing, on behalf of Keele University, to formally raise and register our concerns about the impact the smells emanating from Walleys Quarry are beginning to have on our three core business themes, International Teaching and Research, Student Living and Study Spaces and the Regional Centre for business led R&D/employment.

I would ask that plans are developed to ensure that these smells are properly managed and controlled, in order remove any potential impact on the University.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of the name 'Trevor' followed by 'McMILLAN' in a stylized, cursive script.

PROFESSOR TREVOR McMILLAN
VICE-CHANCELLOR

C.c. P Butters, Director of Estates and Development, Keele University