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A question of Chalk Pit noise and dust

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Noise and dust pollution from the Chalk Pit waste recycling centre in Epsom continues to exacerbate the Council as residents' complaints continue unabated.

On 26th March 2024 Epsom and Ewell Council decided to allocate funds to address the issue. £40,000 was reserved for independent noise investigation, and £100,000 was allocated for potential enforcement and litigation work. The Environment Committee was directed to identify equivalent savings or income to replenish the reserve by the end of the financial year 2025-2026.

Questions were raised at the Full Council 30th July on progress.

Cllr **Steve McCormick** (RA Woodcote and Langley) asked his fellow RA ward Councillor **Liz Frost** (Chair of the Environment Committee) "The Chalk Pit site is still causing many of our residents noise and dust nuisance with several complaints being logged daily to this council, Surrey County Council and the Environment Agency. There are planning applications in process with Surrey County Council but in the meantime, residents are experiencing regular disturbance to the unencumbered enjoyment of their homes and gardens. What actions are this council taking to address these statutory issues that this council is responsible for?"

Cllr Frost responded: "The Council has proceeded in line with its statutory duties to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to investigate complaints of nuisance. This has included an early morning visit to characterise and witness the noise at that time. Further, and as a consequence of a temporary diversion of resource away from a separate statutory service, the council intends to deploy a dedicated officer for Chalk Pit work alone for a limited number of hours per week over the summer period."

Cllr McCormick pressed the matter: "Can Councillor Frost confirm details for the dedicated officer mentioned, specifically how many hours per week, confirmation on the role of the officer resource, i.e., additional monitoring, for example? And why is the summer period only in scope? Why not a longer period until statutory nuisance is resolved?"

Cllr Frost replied: "The number of hours is not yet known. We are working with somebody who we are hoping to engage, who has a lot of experience in this type of work. So we will be having an expert who is used to investigating noise nuisance and knows what they're looking for. We're hoping that the work will start in August. I can't really tell you how long it will go on for or exactly how many hours; it depends on how much is needed, and the contract has yet to be signed, so it's difficult to answer that."

Cllr **James Lawrence** (LibDem College) pursued the matter further: "It's very useful to hear that we've got some form of plan for a dedicated officer time and resource to focus on the Chalk Pit. Would the Chair agree that it is unacceptable for residents to be woken up at 5:40 a.m. due to the repeated banging and experience repeated disruption throughout the day? Has this experience influenced your decision to give this dedicated officer resource?"

Councillor Frost responded: "I do agree this is not a good situation with people being woken up at this time. I think we would all agree with that. The difficulty comes with finding the actual evidence and identifying exactly who is responsible. That is something we are hoping to get more information on, but yes, it is not a good situation."

Meanwhile local residents complain they are suffering and the Council and other agencies are not doing enough quickly enough.

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