

South Somerset District Council Statement

Response to Inspector's Question

Anthrax Contamination - North East Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension.

- 1.1 In response to the potentially serious nature of concerns raised by respondents regarding possible anthrax contamination on the north east Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension, the Inspector has requested a brief statement from the Council regarding the matter. The Council wishes it to be known that a on 14th May 2014 a direct response was issued to an interested party who has raised concerns regarding this matter.
- 1.2 The potential for anthrax in this location has also been raised during the public consultation in connection with planning application 12/04074/OUT. This application concerned the erection of two dwellings on land adjacent to Primrose Lane, Yeovil (GR 356629 1188062). As a precautionary measure following the anecdotal reports of possible anthrax infected cattle having been on the site in the 1960s, site investigations were undertaken and no spores were found. The planning application was subsequently approved.
- 1.3 The Council recognises that local people are understandably concerned about the possible presence of anthrax. However, this is a matter that can be managed through the normal development management process by checking reports / evidence submitted by the developer in support any planning application. At a strategic-level, animal disposal does not constitute a 'show-stopper' for development at the North East Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension.
- 1.4 Nationally there are occasional cases of anthrax contamination in the general public, but these are rare and all have been linked to either occupational exposures, imported goods, or lifestyle exposures. None have resulted from the use of land. That being said, given the concerns and stress caused by even rumours of anthrax, the Council consider that precautionary testing on animal burial sites was and is proportionate.
- 1.5 To allay any concerns that may arise, it is the Council's approach to ask that suspected locations of telluric infection and carcass disposal be tested for anthrax. Areas of carcass disposal would be tested and if there were residues from fires these residues would be expected to be removed. The residues of burning with a propellant (diesel oil or paraffin) result in a layer of residues that would be inappropriate for garden use for a number of years.
- 1.6 Residential developments of the size proposed at the North East Sustainable Urban Extension need to submit a general soil survey and waste management plan as part of the development management process. There are no further requirements for additional measures to be put into place at the current time.

- 1.7 At a site specific level there is already an awareness of anthrax in connection with past land uses. In October 2012, work was undertaken by the landowner and prospective developer to carry out a detailed investigation of the exact site where the animal carcasses were destroyed.
- 1.8 Work was carried out by Forge Environmental Management Ltd to investigate whether anthrax spores were present. Five soil samples were taken from the site and subjected to laboratory testing by The Environmental Laboratory Ltd in East Sussex. The analytical report shows that no anthrax spores were detected.
- 1.9 In summary, the Council is aware of the issue and is aware of the site investigation works carried out on the land directly affected (as well as a further survey in close proximity). This evidence shows that no anthrax spores have been detected and that there is no justification for this being a reason to reject the North East Yeovil option as a potential location for growth. As an aside, the Council notes that the farmer's herd continues to graze on the land in question.
- 1.10 The Council expects that any other assessments and mitigation can be suitably addressed through the normal planning application process.