

## Press Release – Turners Fire, responsibility and immediate action

19<sup>th</sup> February 2013

William Hobhouse, 07801 182 228

The TBA Working Party has been very concerned for 9 months about the safety risks at the site. With the fire, the concerns have been realised. I particularly refer you to the Rochdale Observer article of 17<sup>th</sup> October 2012.

William Hobhouse, Chairman of the TBA Working Party, said:

‘This site is the first and largest asbestos factory. It has been well known as a dusty factory for decades.

Friday’s fire created clouds of smoke. Many residents at considerable distance from the site could smell and see the smoke coming from this large fire.

The potential for the release of asbestos fibre is a significant worry. The people of Rochdale will need to know the facts about this site and this fire, so that those responsible for the site are held fully accountable.

At the end of January, United Utilities conducted air monitoring on the site.

This baseline data could be an important reference for new air monitoring. I hope that the authorities have taken new air samples in the immediate aftermath of the fire, so that we will know the extent of the danger.’

The TBA Working Party is having an emergency meeting on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> February. The agenda is:

1. With regard to the failure to prevent a fire despite repeated and detailed concerns expressed by the community and the Working Party:
  - a) What options were available to the Council and Fire Service regarding the site security and fire prevention measures in place during the time May 2012 to 15<sup>th</sup> February 2013. [Written Council note to WP members to be circulated by email prior to meeting](#)
  - b) Written explanation from the Council and Fire Service as to how the vacant unit could have burnt down in light of the Council statement of 17.10.2013 stating that all combustible materials had been removed. [Written Council note to WP members to be circulated by email prior to meeting \(Actions requested by WP to be minuted\)](#)

- c) Any other matters regarding the failure to prevent trespass, repeated incidents of theft, and fire. (Actions requested by WP to be minuted)
2. With regard to the fire on the morning of 15<sup>th</sup> February 2013:
- a) Will the Council provide all the information they have that assesses the risk of asbestos release and other contaminants from the destroyed building, both prior and post fire? Council Decision prior to meeting (Yes/No; listing of this information)
  - b) What analysis work has been, or will be conducted after the incident, for example, information on wind direction, speed and potential fallout out zones in the surrounding area? Council to bring information to meeting (Actions requested by WP to be minuted)
  - c) Current situation on air monitoring, and new surface sampling for asbestos. Council to bring information to meeting (Actions requested by WP to be minuted)
  - d) Whether the Council will provide a contact number or helpline for residents? Council Decision prior to meeting (Yes/No; listing of this information)
  - e) Other matters (Actions requested by WP to be minuted)