

**“That with works on the East Tip nearing completion, Cork County Council would outline the steps proposed to achieve the “whole of island” approach to remediation of Haulbowline Island that was committed to the European Commission in 2015.”**

Irish Ispat pulled out of Haulbowline Island in 2001. The Irish government took legal action against the liquidator, acknowledging as far back as 2003 that there was “serious environmental pollution” and in 2004, instructing the Department of the Environment to carry out a site investigation to determine the levels of contamination and the remediation options.

This didn’t happen. In 2009, the inactivity was complained to the European Commission who some years previously had judged against Ireland in relation to our country’s failure to correctly adhere to the provisions of the Waste Directive with regard to landfilling. This same failure applied to the East Tip on Haulbowline Island. The government agreed to clean up the East Tip.

In 2011, another complaint went to the Commission that the government was proposing to deal with the 9 hectare East Tip only. That in fact the remaining 11 hectares of the site included another older dump, the South Tip, and the factory site which was more contaminated than the East Tip and was intrinsically connected to it. The Commission decided to visit Haulbowline Island.

In 2015, Ireland told the Commission that the remediation of Haulbowline Island would be based on a “whole of island” approach, including full remediation of the East Tip (to deal with the original ECJ judgement) and ground level remediation of the South Tip and factory site. This was confirmed again in January 2016 by Simon Coveney, then Minister for Agriculture.

But twice in 2017, the subsequent Minister for Agriculture in referring to Haulbowline Island spoke of the remediation only in the context of the East Tip. He commented on how that remediation was expected to be complete in 2018. There was no mention of further works nor of the South Tip or the factory site. That remediation may address only the ECJ ruling against Ireland simply to stay out of trouble with the Commission would be most concerning. I am also mindful that it took the government 5 years and a complaint to the European Commission to even start site investigations on the East Tip. So it is valid to be concerned about commitments to the South Tip and factory site being confined to mere statements.

In that context I welcome the report from the Department. However, I find the Department’s description of what it is doing to be quite confusing. It seems to say that it has done a risk assessment of the factory site; a review of the risk assessment; it has commissioned a design of remediation options and recommendation of the best way to do it; and that it is preparing consents.

It doesn’t say what the recommended remediation solution is. It doesn’t say whether the detailed design has been done for that, although it does say that detailed design is necessary. It gives no timeline. And it refers only to the factory site. It doesn’t mention the South Tip at all.

It doesn’t mention that in its 2015 statement, it promised to complete remediation of the entire island in 2.5 years at a cost of €61m but the only area of the island addressed in that 2.5 years has been the East Tip at a cost of about €15m.

I would like us to revert to the Department, look for clarity on the recommended method of remediation and a timeline. And I would like them to state their intentions for the South Tip.