



Highfields Landfill Site, Walsall- Community Update February 2020

Introduction

This is the second in a series of updates, which will provide residents with the latest information about our regulation of the Highfields Landfill site in Walsall.

We are sorry to hear that residents are experiencing problems with odour in the local area. Please be assured that we are working with the operator, Enovert North Limited, to resolve these issues.

Keeping you up to date on our progress is very important to us and we hope our updates will answer many of your questions. We have also produced a landfill frequently asked questions (FAQ) document, which can be viewed on the link below:

https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/west-midlands/highfields-landfill-walsall/user_uploads/generic-landfill-faqs-1.pdf

What we do?

The Environment Agency regulate the environmental permit held by Enovert North Limited, the operator for Highfields landfill. Within the permit there are conditions concerning the operations which the site can carry out including which waste types can be accepted and how they are handled, emissions and monitoring. Walsall Council provides a specialist monitoring, investigation and enforcement service with respect to air quality, contaminated land, noise and vibration. This service is supporting the Environment Agency in its role as primary regulator of the site. In addition, the Council's Public Health Team have a duty to reduce health inequalities and improve the health of the local population.

Latest News

Air Quality Monitors

We will be installing fixed Air Quality monitors in the Horse and Jockey pub car park from March. This will allow us to understand where odours are coming from on site, especially out of hours when the community have said they are the worst. The data collected will help Walsall Council understand the health impacts.

Gas Audit

We undertook a gas audit on the 4 February 2020. We found that the gas system is now capturing twice as much gas and this has been sustained since late January. This is good as it will mean less gas is lost to atmosphere. We have given Enovert a list of priority actions that include increasing gas monitoring of the site perimeter, onsite and newly engineered areas to allow any issues to be picked up quickly and addressed.

Progress of works against the action plan

Work is on target at present despite the heavy rain: 3000m² of plastic cap is now in place near to the site entrance.

- Clay and temporary geomembrane capping materials are now in place on the new cell (cell 4 near Woodbridge Close).
- New gas pipes and gas wells in cell 4 have been installed and connected to the gas system.
- New Leachate tank is in place and a review on how best to reduce odours from tankering is in progress.



Above: Environment Agency Officer inspecting gas pipework 4 February 2020.



What is the health impact on local residents?

In response to concerns raised about health impacts, the advice of Public Health England [PHE] has been sought. PHE have confirmed their position that living close to a well-managed landfill site does not pose a significant risk to human health. More detailed information at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landfill-sites-impact-on-health-from-emissions>



Above: Temporary geomembrane capping on the flanks of Cell 3 (near to the site entrance)

The human nose is very sensitive to odours. Odours can cause nuisance which possibly lead to stress and anxiety. Some people may experience symptoms such as nausea, headaches or dizziness, even when the substances that cause those smells are themselves not harmful to health. If residents have health concerns, they are advised to contact their local GP, who can seek advice from PHE or or contact NHS Direct on 111 or

<https://www.nhs.uk/>

Our commitment

As part of our site regulation activities we continue to undertake odour checks at least weekly and undertake announced and unannounced inspections. We are reviewing Enovert's submissions to ensure all of the engineering requirements meet environmental standards. Enovert North Limited has confirmed that they are committed to the long term future of the site and compliance with their Environmental Permit.

Your odour reports

We operate a 24-hour incident hotline. Our hotline number is **0800 80 70 60**. You can use this number to tell us if the site is causing a problem. In order to gather reliable evidence we need reports to be timely and accurate.

Our response

We take any reports of odour seriously. When we receive a call to the incident hotline, an officer will decide on the level and nature of our response. As we are already aware that the source of odour is likely to be the landfill site, we will not attend all complaints, but our officers will continue to make regular and unannounced site visits.

Keeping local residents updated

We will continue to provide updates via our newsletter and online information page. The link to our information page is below:

<https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/west-midlands/highfields-landfill-walsall/>

If you would like to receive our newsletter, please email

Engagement_WestMids@environment-agency.gov.uk and we will add you to our mailing list.

Our next update will be provided by the end of March 2020.

Thank you for taking the time to read this update.