

News Release

18 February 2022

Consultation begins on proposed changes to permit conditions at Walleys Quarry

- Environment Agency consults on its draft decision to vary the environmental permit for Walleys Quarry Landfill
- Permit variation would impose new conditions for monitoring methane emissions and capping the site
- Consultation begins w/c 21 February 2022

The Environment Agency will consult on its draft decision to vary environmental permitting conditions for Walleys Quarry Landfill, Cemetery Road, Silverdale, Newcastle under Lyme.

An application to vary the conditions of the environmental permit (Ref. DP3734DC) was made in July 2020 by the site operator, Walleys Quarry Ltd (formerly named Red Industries RM Ltd), to allow changes to approved landfill operations.

Variations to environmental permits are not unusual during the operational lifespan of a landfill site. The specific variations within this permit are standard for such a regulated site. In most cases they are introduced to allow for the implementation of improved operational technologies and techniques, or to add additional conditions to improve regulation.

Applications of this kind do not require public consultation. However, given the level of interest from the neighbouring community, the Environment Agency has decided to carry out a consultation before it reaches its final decision.

The permit variation application proposes two changes. The first relates to the type of material used to cap the landfill as part of the restoration process. The current permit requires the use of a clay layer to seal the site, but the operator has instead requested that a geo-synthetic layer be used. Whilst clay is a widely used and acceptable means of capping, geo-synthetic caps are more effective in controlling landfill gas emissions and offer a better alternative to clay.

The second change involves the introduction of revised limits of methane and carbon dioxide measured at specific boreholes at the perimeter of the site. This will allow the Environment Agency to better identify the levels of methane emitted by Walleys Quarry. The removal of carbon dioxide compliance limits is standard across the landfill sector.

Gas detected at the specified boreholes does not contain hydrogen sulphide, so an amendment to account for these background levels will not increase the risk of odours.

Having carefully considered Walleys Quarry Ltd's application, the Environment Agency is satisfied that the proposals do not increase the risk to the environment or human health. As a result, it is proposing to accept the operator's proposals and to vary the current permit conditions to incorporate the requested changes.

Those interested are invited to submit any new relevant information related to the proposed changes before a final decision is made. The consultation begins on 21 February 2022 and will remain open for 20 days.

To access the relevant documentation from Monday 21 February, please visit the consultation website at <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/psc/st5-6dh-walleys-quarry-landfill-site-epr-dp3734dc/>.

The consultation documents can also be viewed from Monday 21 February in the following local libraries:

- Newcastle Library, Castle House, Barracks Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 1BL
- Knutton Library, Church Lane, Knutton, Newcastle, Staffordshire, ST5 6EB
- Silverdale Library, High Street, Silverdale, Newcastle-under-Lyme, ST5 6LY

Anyone wishing to comment on the proposals is invited to read the documentation online or at the local libraries detailed above before responding electronically on the website or by email to PSCpublicresponse@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Those unable to make representation via the consultation website or by email should contact the Environment Agency on 03708 506 506.

[ends]

Notes for editors

- The Environment Agency's draft decision follows a detailed and rigorous assessment of the application.
- The Environment Agency's consultation is only able to address comments that relate directly to the proposed changes outlined in the decision document and not wider concerns relating to the site as a whole.
- Walleys Quarry Ltd is the operator of the landfill site and it alone is responsible for the hydrogen sulphide emissions escaping from the site.
- The Environment Agency is responsible for regulating the operation of the site under its permit in accordance with government guidance.
- The Environment Agency is working with its statutory partners to ensure Walleys Quarry Ltd complies with its environmental obligations and takes action to reduce hydrogen sulphide emissions from its site.

- Whether or not the permit variation is issued, will not change the Environment Agency's determination to tackle the problems at the site to reduce the impact of landfill odours to neighbouring communities.
- Suspension of waste acceptance would not resolve ongoing odour issues. Importing new waste in accordance with the permit has a part to play in controlling landfill gas.

For all media enquiries please call 0800 917 9267, including out of hours

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Follow us on Twitter @EnvAgencyMids

customer service line
03708 506 506

incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
03459 88 11 88

www.gov.uk/environment-agency