

Walleys Quarry Landfill Site

26 March 2021

We continue to receive high numbers of complaints about odour and we recognise the ongoing difficulties experienced by residents and others in Silverdale, Newcastle under Lyme, and surrounding areas.

We are taking these reports very seriously. Our officers are continuing to conduct regular inspections of the landfill site and surrounding areas and our air quality monitoring equipment is continuing to collect data 24 hours a day.

Compliance Assessment and enforcement

Following an inspection of the site and surrounding areas on 23 March 2021, and a review of the progress made by Red Industries on actions related to capping the site and managing landfill gas, we have issued an enforcement notice.

In this inspection we have identified a further two breaches of the company's permit and, in line with our regulatory procedures, we have issued Red Industries with the actions they need to take to address these breaches in a Compliance Assessment Report.

Two breaches of the company's permit were identified:

- A minor breach, classified as CCS3 in accordance with our compliance guidance. Waste odours were perceived to be at levels likely to cause pollution outside the site. With Red Industries not taking all appropriate measures to prevent this.
- A minor breach classified as CCS3 in accordance with our compliance guidance. The company's management system and operating procedures have resulted in the main cause of odour leaving the site.

Odour appeared to be emanating from the waste area due for permanent capping.

To address this, today (Friday 26 March), the Environment Agency has issued Red Industries with an enforcement notice outlining the specific steps Red Industries urgently need to take to address the issues.

The Environment Agency has given Red Industries until 30 April 2021 to make the necessary improvements to its management system and operating procedures to comply with its permit. This enforcement notice makes this a legal requirement and if these steps are not made we will take further regulatory action.

The legal regulatory framework, and therefore the Environment Agency's regulatory approach where permit breaches are detected, is to give an operator a specific amount of time to respond to our required actions.

At the same audit visit, officers noted:

- All surface water and settled groundwater discharges from the site have temporarily ceased at the time of inspection.
- Most of the water from the lagoon, which was previously over the level it should have been, had been removed for treatment and preparations for the removal of the residual sediment were underway.

As of Friday 26 March 2021, Red Industries agreed to continue to voluntarily suspend their landfill operations to focus on these actions.

However, until the capping works and associated gas management actions are completed, there will still be odours from the site. This is why we are working to make sure these works are carried out as quickly and effectively as possible and our enforcement notice makes it compulsory for the company to deliver these.

Air Quality monitoring

We have downloaded initial data from the air quality monitoring unit at Galingale View. We have shared this data with Public Health England (PHE) as the experts on public health. We have also informed Staffordshire County Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council through our continued multi-agency meetings in response to the range of issues relating to the Walleys Quarry landfill site.

The Environment Agency is undertaking further air quality monitoring. We will continue to share the data with Public Health England and other partners with a responsibility for public health (as outlined in the multi-agency roles and responsibilities section below) to enable them to review and assess any possible impact on public health.

Air quality monitoring units

Working with our partners at Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council and Public Health England, the Environment Agency shared proposals to install additional monitoring equipment, discussions with partners are ongoing.

Our initial two specialist air quality mobile monitoring units are fully operational and collecting monitoring data continuously. They monitor parameters related to landfill gasses, including methane (CH₄) particulates (PM) and hydrogen sulphide (H₂S). They will remain in place for at least 3 months.

The units also have a weather station which records wind speed, direction, temperature and pressure.

The locations of the units have been determined after reviewing odour report locations and identifying where we have received a high level of reports. The location of the monitor must also be in a secure location with a dedicated electrical supply which must be assessed and approved before operation.

Data will be collated into a full report which we will give to Public Health England to provide expert opinion on any human health impacts. We will then share the findings with local residents and interested parties, including an assessment of any environmental impacts.

Red Industries

On Thursday 25 March we were made aware of independent testing that Red Industries has commissioned into other potential sources of hydrogen sulphide contamination in the Silverdale and wider Newcastle under Lyme area.

We have already started gathering more information about the situation in line with our regulation of the landfill permit. There are no public water supply abstractions in the immediate vicinity and Severn Trent Water have been informed. We have also made the Coal Authority aware as the body with responsibility for the effects of historic coal mining activities.

In line with our approach to date, we will continue to support multi-agency working in relation to this new information and will share our findings with all partners.

Multi-agency roles and responsibilities

- The Environment Agency regulates the two environmental permits held by Red Industries RM Limited ('the operator') for the landfill. The permit covers onsite activities with the aim of minimising the impact on the local environment in terms of air quality, noise, odour, dust, leachate and impacts to groundwater. We enforce that permit through monitoring and undertaking site visits (both announced and unannounced) and where needed we take enforcement action to address compliance issues.
- Staffordshire County Council is responsible for determining planning permission across the area. The Environment Agency comments on planning applications. The Council also has responsibilities for traffic movement. This is part of planning permission for the site and is not included in the Environment Agency permit conditions.
- Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council is responsible for regularly monitoring air quality across the area, to ensure that it does not impact human health.
- Public Health England provide guidance and advice on risk to human health. If residents have health concerns then they should contact their local GP in the first instance.

Where possible, we are asking residents to report odours in the local area surrounding Walleys Quarry via email. To report an odour issue related to Walleys Quarry, please [Click Here](#). This will open a template email for you to complete and send to our Incident Communications Service (ICS).

Our incident hotline is primarily there to help people report new things about which we do not know and are not yet acting on. The volume of calls we are receiving on this issue is leading to a very real risk that we will miss a call on a different, new and urgent issue. We understand the odour issues that are being experienced at Walleys Quarry and that the ability to report them to us is important. We are taking this very seriously and reporting via email will ensure that we continue to capture and log all submitted odour reports.