

## Walley's Quarry Landfill – Operated by Red Industries - Update - 11 March 2021

We recognise and understand concerns about odour from the Walley's Quarry Landfill site in Silverdale, Newcastle under Lyme and its impact on the surrounding areas. We take these reports very seriously and do not underestimate the difficulty of the situation for residents. We wanted to provide you with an update on our current position, which you are welcome to share with local residents and interested parties.

### Background Information

We have been working with partners to address local community concerns with a multi-agency response over a number of years.

- We regularly inspect the site and assess odours in the area around the boundary. Over recent months we have been holding additional regulatory conversations with Red Industries on the actions in its odour management plan.
- We undertook air quality monitoring (AQM) in 2018/19 and 2019/20 which showed levels of hydrogen sulphide and methane were not breaching limits set by the World Health Organisations (WHO). Public Health England also confirmed there were no associated health risks based on the data.
- We attend the Red Industries run liaison group and also run a specific website to keep the community informed of our regulatory activities on site. This can be found here - <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/west-midlands/walleys-quarry-landfill-silverdale/>

Since December 2020 we have seen a significant increase in reports of odour from the local community and surrounding areas and have increased our response further. There was then a significant stepped increase in complaints between 25 and 27 February.

### Additional air quality monitoring

We have installed two specialist air quality mobile monitoring units that are collecting data. At the end of each month of data Public Health England will provide an assessment of the data and we will make it available on our website. There will also be a full and summary report at the end of the three month period on which Public Health England will provide expert opinion on any human health impacts.

Our officers are frequently visiting the area, and will continue to undertake assessments, site visits, and more detailed audits to assess compliance with the permit. If our findings lead us to substantiate that Red Industries has breached its permit, we will specify the actions it needs to take to rectify this and specify a timescale in-line with legal requirements. If the operator does not rectify this non-compliance then we have a range of regulatory powers that we can and will use.

### Discharge of surface water into the Silverdale Brook

Local residents have expressed concern about discharge from the landfill site entering the Silverdale Brook. We have sampled and analysed the discoloured discharge and the results did not highlight any concerns or any risks to the environment. The operator is cleaning the surface water lagoon to address the discolouration and has temporarily stopped discharging to the Brook while this work is being completed.

### Work completed on site

Linked to our ongoing regulatory conversations Red Industry has been implementing measures to help reduce the potential for odours in the future. Work to date includes:

- Temporary capping of the elevated mound that residents can see
- New vertical gas wells which are part of work to increase gas capture

This work is however ongoing and still to be completed are:

- Installation of additional horizontal gas wells in the active cell to complete this work to better capture gas
- Removal of surface water that has collected within the landfill
- Repair and replace litter fencing

### **Role and Responsibilities**

It is important to note that regulation of this issue is spread across multiple partners. We have instigated a meeting today (Thursday), chaired by the Staffordshire Local Resilience Forum, to bring all partners together so we can ensure a joined up response to the issue and joined up communications to the public. Our view of the main responsibilities is as follows:

- **The Environment Agency** regulates the two environmental permits held by Red Industries RM Limited ('the operator') for the landfill. We permit the 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 EA comment 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, and the GP can ask for appropriate advice from the aforementioned bodies.

### **Ongoing communication with MPs**

We recognise this is an incredibly important issue on which MPs are getting a lot of correspondence. We will continue to keep the community and you updated but need to do this as and when we have something new that we can share. We anticipate updating this briefing weekly for the time being.

We are also asking residents to use our email address [ics@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:ics@environment-agency.gov.uk) for reporting odours in the local area. 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.