

Walleys Quarry Landfill Site

01 April 2021

We remain committed to regulating Walleys Quarry landfill site in Silverdale, Newcastle under Lyme, operated by Red Industries. Our primary focus continues to be doing everything within our power to bring its operation into compliance with its permit as quickly as we can. We recognise that many want to see faster action. Whilst we understand this and are setting the operator a challenging timetable we must also make sure there is enough time to do the work properly.

Many residents have contacted us with concerns about the potential health impact of these odours. We have been sharing these with the local experts in health advice: Public Health England, Staffordshire County Council and Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council as they are best placed to provide advice and guidance.

We continue to actively inspect the site and surrounding areas on a regular basis and respond to complaints about odour in the area. We take these reports very seriously and we recognise and understand the ongoing difficulties experienced by residents and others in the area.

Discharge to Silverdale Brook

Thank you to the community of Silverdale for reporting a pipe discharging into the Silverdale Brook on Saturday 27 March.

We attended and found that a section of pipe from one of the on-site lagoons was leaking. Red Industries repaired the leak on the Saturday evening. Our officers made a further visit to the site on Sunday 28 March and found the discharge had ceased.

We took precautionary samples of the discharge and we are awaiting the results, which we expect to receive in the next week.

We completely understand why people were concerned to see this discharge occurring. The water that was leaking from the pipe was from a lagoon that stores groundwater. The site's environmental permit allows water from this lagoon to routinely discharge to the brook, although Red Industries had temporarily agreed to stop discharging while they were working on one of their lagoons.

Red Industries' groundwater investigation

On Thursday 25 March we were made aware of independent testing that Red Industries has commissioned into other potential sources of odour from hydrogen sulphide contamination in the area. We are working with partners urgently to investigate and eliminate potential other sources of hydrogen sulphide.

There are no public water supply abstractions in the immediate vicinity but we have still made sure Severn Trent Water has been informed and, along with the Coal Authority, are involved in our multi-agency working on this issue.

Compliance assessment and enforcement notice – an update

As we explained in our last update, we have issued Red Industries with an enforcement notice outlining the specific steps it needs to take to address the permit breaches identified at the site.

In our previous update we said, “*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.*”

To clarify, the specific actions Red Industries are required to take in this enforcement notice are around the necessary improvements to permanently cap part of the site, and temporarily cap other parts of the site.

Specifically:

- We have required cell 1, which is the completed cell, to be permanently capped. Permanent capping is a term used when the cell is no longer being used for the deposition of waste and the cell is considered to be closed.
- We have also required cell 2 to be temporarily capped. Where capping work is being carried out on an area of the landfill which is not completed but no waste is being added for some time, it is termed temporary capping, as waste may still be added on top.

As of Friday 26 March 2021, Red Industries agreed to continue to voluntarily restrict their landfill operations to focus on these actions. Some waste will continue to be accepted as part of the final capping operations.

It is important to note, 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.

No landfill will ever be completely odour free, as to capture all the gas generated from the landfill would be extremely difficult. However, the level and type of odour arising from such operations should not be causing offence. The current work on capping will significantly improve the seal of the site and should therefore reduce the amount of landfill gas escaping from the site surfaces which has the potential to cause odour.

This is why we are working with Red Industries to make sure they carry out the works as quickly and effectively as possible and our enforcement notice makes it compulsory for the company to deliver these by the 30 April 2021.

Air quality monitoring data

The air quality monitoring units at Galingale View and Silverdale Road are collecting information around the clock, and we continue to download the data from these units. This data is with Public Health England (PHE) as the experts on public health. They can provide expert opinion on any human health impacts. The data is also being shared with Staffordshire County Council and Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council to inform their health advice and actions.

We also continue to inform 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.

At the end of the monitoring, all the information will be collated into a full report which will be

analysed by 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.

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 on-site 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 ask 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.