

North East charities benefit as stinky landfill operator pays £75,000 to make amends for Ryton blight

Suez UK Environment Limited, which failed to meet its environmental obligations and breached the conditions of its environmental permit, submitted an Enforcement Undertaking to the Environment Agency, which has now been accepted.

An Enforcement Undertaking is a voluntary offer made by companies and individuals to make amends for their offending.

The Environment Agency was made aware of nuisance odours at the landfill site in 2015 following thousands of complaints to its national incident hotline from communities in Ryton, Stargate, Stella and Crookhill.

Subsequent investigations found that the cause of the odours was due to excessive landfill gas emissions, produced by rotting waste. Enforcement action was taken by the Environment Agency, requiring Suez UK Environment Ltd to take immediate action to improve its method of capturing landfill gas and work towards a full site closure in 2017.

Area Environment Manager, Andrew Turner, said:

“Nuisance odours from the site persisted for a period of months and led to a great deal of distress for those affected. When companies fail to meet their environmental obligations, it’s a serious matter and we will take appropriate action, which may include civil sanctions.

“Enforcement Undertakings can offer a better resolution than prosecutions, which allow the offender to put things right and help to improve our environment. These payments of £75,000 will do just that by supporting eight different projects across the North East, with benefits that include supporting wildlife and conservational projects, schemes to reduce ‘fly-tipping’ and helping local environment and community organisations.”

The offer from Suez UK Environment Limited detailed the closure of the landfill in 2017 and its subsequent engineering works to complete a landfill gas extraction system and ‘cap’ the site with an impermeable membrane material. These works will help to reduce the risk of further odour nuisance from the site.