

Scrutiny Committee Update

Update on our work at Peckfield Landfill Site

November 2015

Our aim is to protect and improve the environment so everyone can enjoy the benefits of a clean, safe and healthy place to live, work and play. We issue environmental permits that set standards for those operating waste management facilities including landfills like the site at Peckfield. The operator, Caird Peckfield Ltd (CPL) must comply with this in order to minimise their impact on the environment and the local community.

HMRC Operation

We are unable to provide any details regarding the operation that we took part in on 23 September 2015. This was led by HMRC and we will not be able to answer any questions about the operation during scrutiny meetings. Any queries about it should be directed to HMRC.

Disposal Activities and Engineering Works

Since the beginning of May all disposal activities have moved into Cell 11a, this move has resulted in the majority of the activities on site now being within the low section of the quarry, therefore minimising the visual impact from tipping activities.

CPL confirmed at a meeting with us on 15 October 2015 that following the HMRC operation waste inputs into the site did decrease initially but they are now seeing waste inputs increase steadily as the number of operators using the site continues to increase to previous numbers. They also confirmed that construction of Cell 11b has been suspended due to the window to complete the work prior to winter being too short, therefore these works will recommence in early spring 2016. CPL have told us that this delay will not reduce waste volumes entering the site as there is sufficient void remaining within Cell 11a.

Restoration and Capping Works

The placement of restoration soils on the capped areas Cell 6, 7 & 8 was completed in July. In order to meet with planning requirements the final layer of topsoil was mixed with crushed sandstone to give a calcareous soil which is required for the proposed grassland.

In June an action plan was agreed with CPL for the permanent capping of Cell 9a, 9b and 10a. The plan specified timescales to complete a number of works thus ensuring the capping works are not unreasonably delayed. The placement of a regulatory layer has now been completed on the area of Cell 9a, 9b & 10a, and the area re-profiled; this area is looking a lot better. The visual aspect of the site on nearby properties continues to improve with much of the work on the eastern side of the site now being restored to some degree.

Contractual agreements to complete the lining works for capping have had to be reassessed by CPL recently and a different contractor is being sought. This has impacted upon the programme of works in line with the action plan for capping cells 9a, 9b and 10a and so alternative dates will be agreed to ensure this work moves forward.

Landfill Gas and Leachate Management

Major improvements works on the landfill gas infrastructure has taken place on site. The replacement of the main gas line has now been completed on the eastern end of the site. An additional 15 gas wells on the top section of Cell 10b were also installed in May and extraction on each of these wells has commenced.

CPL completed a surface emission survey two weeks ago; once the emissions survey report is compiled it will be submitted to us for review. Despite the delay in the construction of cell 11b we continue to discuss with CPL the installation of additional gas extraction pipe work within cell 11b so that remaining leachate chambers can be connected into the system. This will have the added benefit of reducing surface emission from the current operational area.

Odour, Litter and Noise

The numbers of odour reports we receive from the community continue to reduce. The damaged litter fence that borders the Eastern neb has now been removed and a new litter fence has been installed along the top section of Cell10a.

With the replacement of the refurbished silencer on Gas Engine 677 in May 2015, a further noise assessment was carried out on site on the 16 and 17 June 2015. The findings of the report indicate that the installation of the three new silencer systems on Engines 677, 680 and 901 has achieved the benefits of reducing low frequency noise from the installation. We now consider that the site has taken all appropriate measures to reduce noise emissions.

What would happen if the operator ceased to exist?

Peckfield Landfill permit is held by a registered company Caird Peckfield Limited; they also own the land on which the landfill is situated. If CPL ceased to exist the landfill site would effectively be abandoned. We have had no indication from the company that this will happen and we have in fact been assured by them that it is business as usual.

However, if this was to happen in the future the environmental permit would also cease to exist and there would be no legal requirement on anyone to manage the site in accordance with the former permit conditions. Most of the duties and powers of the Environment Agency under the Environment Permitting Regulations would also fall with the permit.

At this point the site would need to be assessed under the contaminated land regime. Under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Local Authority would have a lead role in investigating the risk of pollution and harm being caused by an abandoned site. We would support partners as necessary, within the limits of our resources. In practical terms we would alert and liaise with Local Authorities as soon as it became evident abandonment was a real risk. What would happen from here would depend on the outcome of the initial Part IIA investigation/assessment.