

September 2016

Dear Resident,

Further to our previous correspondence we are writing to you to provide you with an update regarding odour within the Lowton, Leigh and Culcheth areas.

We would like to thank you for using our incident hotline to submit reports of odour. In these reports Diggle Green Farm has often been alleged to be the source. We have outlined our position in relation to the Diggle Green Farm site below.

A Broster Ltd, Diggle Green Farm Composting Facility, holds an Environmental Permit for waste activities (composting) and The Environment Agency regulates the site to monitor compliance with the conditions in the permit.

Odour

We monitor the site on a routine basis. This includes unannounced site inspections and routine off site odour monitoring in the local area. After the permit was issued we detected odour off site that could have been linked to the composting activities. We gave advice and guidance to the operator on where improvements needed to be made in terms of how the waste was managed. These improvements were incorporated in to an odour management plan that now forms part of the permit conditions.

Since the odour plan has been in place during our monitoring we have, on occasion, picked up very low level transient odour in the area, but when going on site we have been unable to attribute this to the composting activity. Furthermore, the odour would not be at levels that would be in breach of the environmental permit. We have also noted odour from some vehicle movements off the site, and have passed this information on to the local council as this would fall within their remit.

Food Waste

Several residents have raised the concern that untreated food waste is being accepted at the site. We want to assure residents that during our inspections we have never found any evidence that this is the case. Untreated food waste is **not allowed** under the environmental permit. The site is permitted to accept agricultural waste (manure, straw) and biodegradable wastes from agriculture and industry, but is **not** permitted to accept meat, fish or animal by-products. The compost produced by the site is solely used to spread upon land managed by the Farm.

Flies

We have received a small number of reports of flies which were alleged to be coming from the site. Following reports we undertook an inspection and found minimal, localised fly activity at the site. The species of fly found on the composting area are the type that would

migrate no further than 500 metres. No unusual fly activity has been substantiated by Environment Agency officers off site, or in the surrounding areas.

The compost produced at the farm is to a Publicly Available Specification (PAS) standard which means it is no longer considered waste when this standard is achieved. Therefore, any nuisance from spreading or transport of this product is not under the regulatory control of the Environment Agency and would fall within the remit of the local council. Whilst many of the reports received have highlighted Diggle Green Farm to be the cause of odour in the area there are also other sites and activities in the area, such as land spreading, that have the potential to cause odour.

Update

As we had recently been receiving an increased number of odour reports in the area, we allocated a team of Environment Agency officers to carry out a 3 week monitoring program. This involved twice daily monitoring of the area which, over the period, provided us with the opportunity to monitor the area over a range of different weather conditions and at different times of the day. During this time some low level transient odour was briefly detected (including odour from vehicle movements), but no officers detected persistent or strong odour that would be deemed to be a breach of the permit.

Future reporting and regulation

We are satisfied that the site is operating in compliance with the environmental permit. As with any other site that operates under an environmental permit, we will continue to monitor the site on an appropriate, routine basis. We prioritise our resources according to environmental risk, so monitoring requirements will be determined by the compliance record of the site.

We will not be attending the site in response to odour incident reports in the area, unless we believe the circumstances warrant a visit. Unless the situation changes, we will not be providing feedback in relation to incident reports as we believe it is more beneficial to dedicate our resources to site regulation.

Should any evidence come to light in the future that the site is not operating within the conditions of the permit we will investigate this, require remedial action to be taken by the operator and take appropriate enforcement action if the circumstances warrant it.

If you are unhappy with the way we undertake regulation of the site then you have right to escalate it further, in line with our complaints procedure. If you wish to do this please write to us at the address below or email us at the following address;
correspondence.gmmc@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Regards,

The Customers and Engagement Team

Environment Agency, Richard Fairclough House, Knutsford Road, Warrington, WA4 1HT