Land quality investigation at the Sandy Brow former landfill site

Keeping you informed and up to date

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Historical use of the former landfill Sandy Brow site

The site was largely farmland in the 19th century with some sand extraction pits and a river flowing through the site, after which the area became increasingly developed and a cemetery to the west. Landfilling began in the 1950s with some of the site in the north used as playing fields. The landfilling ceased in the 1970s.

Action to be taken

An environmental ground investigation will be conducted by the councils appointed consultants, The Environmental Protection Group (EPG) and their sub-contractors, to assess potential risks. This will involve installing bore holes with monitoring points and taking soil samples to identify the type of materials on site. Ground (or landfill) gas and ground water, will then be monitored for up to six months. It might be necessary to take samples from rear gardens.

A report will be prepared which will provide conclusions on the site environmental status and tell us whether any safety work or further investigation is necessary.

What happens now?

The investigation is due to start in November and will last up to two weeks. The period of monitoring will start afterwards. There are pictures included in this leaflet which shows the type of drilling rig which will be used and how the ground will look after a monitoring well has been installed.

A ‘drop in’ day has been organised to enable you to meet and speak to council staff and their appointed consultants involved in this project and ask any questions you may have.

Historical use of the former landfill Sandy Brow site

Sandy Brow, a former landfill, is situated immediately east of Sandy Lane in the Spotland area of Rochdale. The site covers an area of approximately 11.4 hectares. It is a public open space surrounded by residential properties to the north and south, commercial buildings to the east and a cemetery to the west.

In 2000, Part 2A of the 1990 Environmental Protection Act came into force, requiring councils to check for sites which may meet the legal definition of ‘contaminated land’. Sandy Brow is currently used as a public open space with sports fields associated facilities and surrounded by residential and commercial buildings. It is therefore considered to be a sensitive site.

Background

How it will affect you

The work will involve the use of plant machinery. It is not expected that any public roads and pathways will need to be closed. Any disruption will be kept to a minimum and whilst there will be some noise, working hours will be kept to between 8am and 5pm to minimise this. There will be no noise at weekends.

If you have any questions you wish to discuss we will be pleased to address them at the open evening, details of which are in the accompanying letter.

Frequently asked questions

- What are you monitoring for?
  Landfill sites can produce a number of gases, the most common being methane and carbon dioxide, but others can be produced in small amounts such as hydrogen sulphide.

- I regularly walk across the field and my children play on it, are they at risk?
  The investigation will include assessing the soil profile and taking samples for analysing in the playing field area and in certain properties back gardens. Available records indicate the landfill was ‘capped’ to prevent site users from coming into contact with the waste material, which indicates if there is a risk it will probably be minimal.

- What are the risks to my family if gas does enter my property?
  The main risk is methane entering a property in an enclosed space, for example a cupboard or cellar. The gas may accumulate to a level at which an explosion risk may exist. However if doors and cupboards are opened regularly it reduces what is a low risk, even further.