



**South
Derbyshire
District Council**

South Derbyshire District Council Environmental Health Service

Case Study 2: Swadlincote Golf Course

The transformation of a former open cast colliery and landfill in the centre of Swadlincote into an 18 hole golf course and leisure complex is the final piece of the jigsaw in transformation of the former industrial town. The £20million development plans to turn an area of post-industrial blight into an eco-friendly asset to the region.

As with any regeneration process, the work necessary to complete the transformation can get messy. In December 2013 contractors 4Recycling Ltd (4R) began the process of soil restoration on the site which involved the importation of compost, lime and biosolids to be spread across almost half of the 47 hectares of the site. The restoration was necessary in order to provide a soil adequate to support the necessary grass growth.

'Biosolids' is the technical term for the sludge waste from sewage treatment works. It's great for plant growth, especially where no soils exist, but it can sometimes have a pungent aroma. So when 4R started spreading two weeks before Christmas, complaints started coming in to the Council's Pollution Control Team and local social media went into overdrive, we knew we'd have a problem.....



The soil restoration project had been given all of the necessary licenses and permits. Never the less it became apparent very quickly that the odour it generated would have a big impact on the surrounding communities. Within the space of two days the Council received nearly 30 complaints covering an area populated by an estimated 5,000 households.

The project was due to last up to 2 months.

Members of the Pollution Team immediately contacted 4R and visited the site. Officers spent time with 4R managers discussing the methods by which the materials were being transported onto the site, stored and then spread. They identified the main points in the process at which odour was being released and agreed with 4R additional odour mitigation methods beyond those which they had already implemented which included:

- the mechanical processes of applying the restoration materials;
- timing of the operations;
- use of odour suppressants and odour abatement sprays;

Work had to stop due to the bad weather, but 4R were due back on site in the spring, when the weather would be better, but people would be out more and so more likely to complain about bad smells.

In advance of this, officers spent time working with 4R to agree a communication strategy so that the local community were fully informed about what was happening and when, emphasising the positives of the project and that the sooner it was complete, the better. This resulted in 4R sending letters to all of the houses in the surrounding communities and the Council using proactive press releases and tweets to keep everyone informed.

Work started again in April 2014. Council officers regularly visited the site to check on the controls. Over the remaining three weeks of the restoration the smells occurred again, but there was barely a word of complaint from the local community.

By working together the contractors and regulators were able to deliver a potentially difficult phase of a key development in a way that worked for developers and the community alike.

Mike Holt, Managing Director of 4R said "Working with the Council EHOs we were able to reassure the community that we were keeping nuisance to an absolute minimum. As a result our soil creation phase of the project is nearing completion, with site seeding to follow. Residents will soon be looking out on a lush green landscape rather than a wasteland."