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Draft

XX January 2018

# Statement

## **Council works with Borough Green residents to monitor landfill gases at former Joco Pit site**

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council is working with Borough Green residents in Tolsey Mead and Eaglestone Close to increase its monitoring of landfill gases, as a precautionary measure, at the site formerly known as Joco Pit.

The Council has been monitoring the site for the landfill gases methane and carbon dioxide since 1991. Although stable low levels of gas have been found historically at the site, recently one of the boreholes we monitor has shown an increase, whilst the other borehole nearby has remained at a consistent level.

The site was previously an inert landfill site from 1939 to 1984. Inert landfill sites are those that are allowed to accept waste materials that will not decompose over time such as chemically clean soil, stones and construction and demolition waste (bricks, concrete etc). The Borough Council believes that, due to less stringent legislation at that time, materials such as wood and household waste could also have been tipped at the site and that this waste may be decomposing and causing landfill gas to be generated.

To investigate this further, the Council has appointed specialist consultants Leap Environmental Ltd to carry out a desk top study to find out whether there was any level of risk associated with the apparent change in gas level recorded in one of the boreholes at the site. Unfortunately, there was insufficient data to create an adequate risk assessment. This means that the Council now has to investigate further by installing new boreholes, as a precautionary measure, to ensure an adequate risk assessment can be made. Leap Environmental Ltd has also been appointed to carry out this additional work.

The Council has written to all residents (56 homes) in Tolsey Mead and Eaglestone Close to explain why further investigation is necessary and what needs to be done. The Council will identify eight new locations where boreholes can be installed and residents have been asked whether they would give permission for a relatively small borehole to be installed in their front garden. Each borehole will be monitored continuously for one month and then weekly for a further two months. At the same time, soil samples will be taken for testing to identify whether any potential contaminants that could also give rise to landfill gas are present.

Data obtained from this exercise will enable a suitable risk assessment to be created. The Council will then be able to take a decision as to whether any further investigation or remedial work is required.

As well as writing to residents, the Council is also holding two drop-in sessions at Potters Mede pavilion, Wrotham Road, Borough Green, (tbc) on Tuesday 30 January between 6pm and 8pm and Thursday 1 February between 7pm and 9pm (tbc) where residents can talk to council officers and our specialist consultants and ask any questions they may have. A list of frequently asked questions is also available online at [www.tmbc.gov.uk/formerjocopit](http://www.tmbc.gov.uk/formerjocopit) (tbc) along with all the project documents and reports. Residents can also email queries to [formerjocopit@tmbc.gov.uk](mailto:formerjocopit@tmbc.gov.uk).

Cllr David Lettington, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council's Cabinet Member for Street Scene and Environment Services, says: "We know that this may be a worrying time for residents living in Tolsey Mead and Eaglestone Close and it is very important to us that we keep them fully informed as investigations continue. We have already written to every household to explain what needs to be done and why and I hope residents will come along to the drop in sessions to talk to our officers and consultants about the work. On the basis of the information currently available, we do not believe the gases pose a serious risk and our main aim is to get additional information from across the site to allow us to confirm this. We will do our best to complete the monitoring as soon as possible and we will continue to keep residents fully up to date as work progresses."

Ends

**Note to editors:**

The Borough Council has also written to residents of 2-18a Wye Road and 47a Annett's Hall to keep them fully informed of the investigations as these properties are directly adjacent to the site.

**Background details**

Planning permission was granted for the construction of 56 homes on the former Joco Pit site (now Tolsey Mead and Eaglestone Close) in 1984. Information and risk assessments submitted at the time of the planning application did not highlight elevated levels of ground gas to be present.

The 1988 Town & Country Planning (General Development) Order introduced the requirement for the waste control authority (in this case Kent County Council Waste Control Section), to be consulted in respect of proposed development on, or within, 250 metres of land which had been used for landfill in the preceding 30 years. This led to a review of all landfills which had already been developed, including Joco Pit. It was this legislation that prompted the start of monitoring work in 1991. Originally, there were 10 boreholes at the site but eight of these have become unusable/unavailable. The Council has been monitoring data regularly from the two remaining positions since 2006.

The Borough Council also has a duty under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to inspect its area for land which, in the past, may have been used in a way that could lead to contamination and to address any issues that may arise.

**Timetable for the work**

The outline timetable for the initial work is given below but this might change depending on a number of factors including what is found during the monitoring process:

- Work to install boreholes to begin late February 2018
- Continuous monitors in place to end of March 2018
- Spot monitoring to begin end of March for a period of two months
- Analysis of results May/June
- Full risk assessment completed by July.

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