

## A progress update from the Shongweni Landfill

The Shongweni Landfill has made progress with its Department of Environmental Affairs' (DEA) agreed plan, and a number of the requirements have been completed.

- All five leachate storage tanks have been covered and fitted with activated carbon gas extraction and filtration systems. This formed part of a detailed leachate management plan that has been submitted to the DEA;
- A hydromulch layer has been added to the landfill surface; this has also been fitted with gas extraction and filtration systems; and
- Two monitors have been purchased to assist with real-time air quality monitoring.

EnviroServ Group CEO Dean Thompson acknowledged that, while R10-million had already been spent, there was still work to be done. “As a company with a proud 37-year history of compliance, we will go beyond legally required minimums as we implement all actions necessary to reduce our impact.”

An independent toxicologist has been appointed to conduct a health risk assessment study and an environmental management company will conduct a technical assessment of the site. As an outcome of these studies, a detailed odour management plan and a landfill gas management plan will be prepared, based on data collected.

“Independent air quality studies conducted in the area don’t indicate any adverse health impacts. An independent medical professional is available but, to date, no community members have yet given permission to investigate their individual medical concerns. EnviroServ runs a comprehensive occupational health surveillance program for all our employees and none have reported any occupational diseases as a result of an exposure at the Shongweni Landfill site,” said Thompson.

The company said that EnviroServ Public Affairs Manager Makgabo van Niekerk would continue to respond to community complaints and queries.

The EnviroServ Group, which employs more than 300 people in Kwa-Zulu Natal and whose local operations are linked with Shongweni, has objected to certain of the actions listed in the compliance notice from the Department of Environmental Affairs.





Thompson said: “After unsuccessfully requesting variations to certain of the compliance actions, we reluctantly lodged an objection around some of the timeframes and actions required of us by the Department that were impractical. We also offered workable counter proposals on the items that we objected to and continue to implement the remaining compliance measures.”

These ongoing actions include suspending the disposal of Type 1 waste, treatment of incoming waste more comprehensively than regulations dictate, and resuming the offsite disposal of effluent subject to DEA approval.

Many of the actions listed in the previously-agreed 11-point plan have been carried forward into the compliance notice.

“Without trying to detract from the seriousness of the matter and our commitment to mitigate our contribution to the odours, the DEA has acknowledged that there is than one source, which they are investigating. Our independent complaints mapping analysis has supported this.

“We remain optimistic that the science of measured impacts will resolve any remaining unanswered questions and will provide what is required to maintain and improve our high operating standards.”