

# Direct NRW to revoke the environmental permit and ensure the closure of Enover't's, Hafod Landfill Site in Wrexham.

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 28 Ebrill 2025  
Petitions Committee | 28 April 2025

Reference: SR25/11030-3

**Petition Number:** P-06-1510

**Petition title:** Direct NRW to revoke the environmental permit and ensure the closure of Enover't's, Hafod Landfill Site in Wrexham.

**Text of petition:**

The Hafod Landfill Site has caused community distress for 18 years, making it Wales' longest running environmental campaign. Despite efforts by residents and elected representatives, the site continues to emit noxious odours, creating an unacceptable statutory nuisance. NRW are responsible for environmental protection and has failed to take meaningful enforcement action, relying instead on technical justifications and vague assurances. This is not just regulatory inertia, but governance failure.

In 2024, the odour and air pollution reached distressing and crisis levels. Families were unable to open their windows, children are forced to play indoors. If NRW regulatory framework allows a site to emit persistent and overpowering odours whilst remaining compliant, then the regulations are clearly not fit for purpose. Their own last Inspection reported key failings such as a non-operational gas engine, increasing the release of landfill gases. Temporary capping of landfill cells that fail to contain odours. Persistent leaks from multiple area of the site. Delays in infrastructure upgrades, leaving the site vulnerable to excessive emissions. In May 2020, a substantial fire broke out, burning for several days and producing thick black smoke. NRW recorded air pollution levels 14 times above the permitted level. If NRW cannot hold Enover't accountable, and they have failed to do so in 18 years, then an independent inquiry into their effectiveness as a regulatory body is urgently needed.



# 1. Background

Mersey Waste Holdings was granted permission to operate the former Hafod quarry site as a landfill in 2004 following a public inquiry. Wrexham Council had previously rejected the company's application. Since November 2008, it has been operated by Enovert North Ltd. (formerly Cory Environmental Limited). The landfill operates under an environmental permit (PP3139GB) issued by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). NRW regulates waste sites in line with its regulatory principles.

In a February 2025 newsletter update, NRW explained the circumstances under which it is able to revoke an environmental permit:

Hafod Landfill operates under an Environmental Permit, which sets out the types and amounts of waste that can be accepted at the site. The permitting regulations do not allow us to include restrictions on where waste comes from.

We only revoke permits if we believe the operation poses a serious risk to the environment or human health, and if all other measures to reduce the odour have been exhausted. At present, the operators are still working through a number of actions to address the issues, and we are regulating them closely.

Closing the site would not immediately get rid of the odours, as leachate and landfill gas would still need to be managed to reduce the potential for offsite odours.

Our regulatory actions are guided by our published regulatory principles, ensuring a balanced and proactive approach.

NRW's most recent compliance report for the Hafod landfill was published in February 2025, and details 5 'non-compliances' of environmental permit conditions. These related to leachate management, landfill gas, chloride monitoring, and surface water monitoring. There were 26 instances of landfill methane emissions exceeding the permitted amount during the final quarter of 2024.

An NRW webpage outlines its ongoing regulatory actions for the site, including:

- regular site inspections;
- reviewing Enovert's management procedures and action plans; and
- working with Wrexham Council to ensure air quality and monitoring meets Welsh Government standards.

NRW says it told Enovert to take action to reduce long-term fugitive (unintentional) emissions in late 2024. Its March 2025 update says Enovert has installed new infrastructure to increase the volume of gas being collected from

Direct NRW to revoke the environmental permit and ensure the closure of Enovert's, Hafod Landfill Site in Wrexham.

---

the site, and that further air quality monitoring equipment will be installed in the near future. On odour emissions to residential areas, it says:

Under the conditions of the Environmental Permit, if the operator is taking appropriate measures to control odour, a breach of the permit does not occur, even if some odour is still detectable. The site operator has identified appropriate measures within their odour management plan to manage odour emissions; however, we understand that there continue to be impacts on the community. We are closely reviewing their plan to determine if any additional measures are needed to further mitigate odours.

NRW highlights the Hafod Landfill Stakeholder Group, which had its first meeting on 21 March 2025.

## 2. Welsh Government action

In his response to the petition, the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, Huw Irranca-Davies MS, says he met with NRW officials and Enovert senior management to discuss the Hafod landfill site on 19 March 2025. He says the site's issues are regulatory and operational, so NRW is "best placed to determine the appropriate regulatory action and I therefore do not feel it is necessary to direct NRW to revoke the permit."

## 3. Welsh Parliament action

On 14 January 2025, Gareth Davies MS asked the Trefnydd for a statement related to the site, specifically raising constituent concerns about a large amount of waste being brought from England. He asked:

...could the Cabinet Secretary for climate change outline how the Welsh Government is working with the UK Government and local authorities in England to ensure that residents in north Wales do not have to pay for the failures of local authorities in the north-west of England?

The Trefnydd, Jane Hutt MS, responded:

You've raised a very specific question and issue for the Cabinet Secretary and Deputy First Minister, and he will find an appropriate way to respond to that. Thank you for raising it.

On 28 January 2025, Mark Isherwood MS asked the Trefnydd for a statement on the Hafod landfill, citing Johnstown constituent complaints about smells and

Direct NRW to revoke the environmental permit and ensure the closure of Enover's, Hafod Landfill Site in Wrexham.

---

NRW's "apparent lack of action in stopping it". The Trefnydd said the point "will be recorded with the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs".

On 10 June 2020, following a **fire at the landfill site**, Llyr Gryffydd MS **asked the then-First Minister**, Mark Drakeford MS, for an independent inquiry into the cause of the fire and for the landfill's closure in the meantime. The First Minister said multiple authorities have responsibilities to provide reports about the fire, and "the Welsh Government will consider those reports and then decide what further action may be needed."

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.