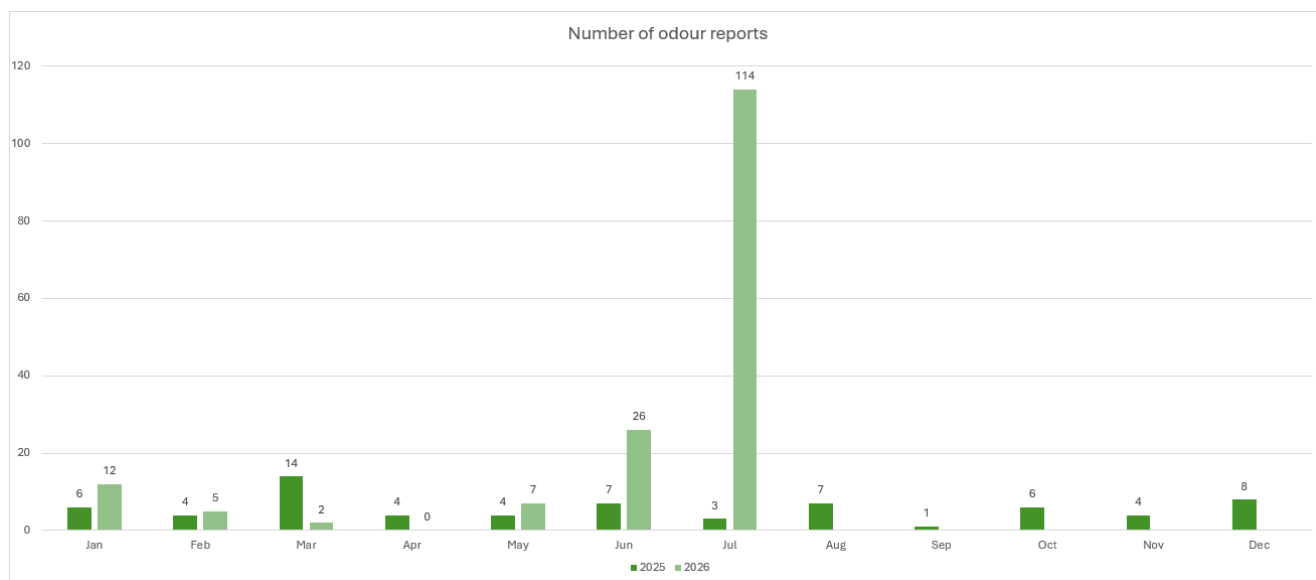


Sutton Courtenay Community Liaison Group: Environment Agency Odour update - July 2026

Background

We have seen a large increase in odour reports from residents in Sutton Courtenay and Appleford in June/July coinciding with the hot weather the UK is experiencing (see bar chart below). We recognise the nuisance that unpleasant odours are causing to the local community. There are several sites in the area that have the potential to generate smells. While our officers have perceived other odours in the area, our investigation has found the FCC compost site at Sutton Courtenay to be the main source of reports in recent months.



This briefing provides an overview of the problem and the action we are taking to ensure FCC resolve this issue as quickly as possible.

Environment Agency Action

We want to thank everyone who has taken the time to report odour issues. These reports are extremely valuable and help us build a clearer picture of when odours are occurring, how widespread they are, and how they are affecting local residents. We understand that some residents may feel frustrated and believe that reporting odours does not lead to any action. Please be assured that every report is recorded, reviewed and used as part of our ongoing assessment of the situation. While we cannot attend every individual report or provide personal updates, the information you provide helps us identify patterns and is shared with FCC so they can investigate potential causes and take action where necessary.

Although the number of complaints received helps us understand the impact on the community, environmental permit compliance cannot be assessed on complaint numbers alone. We must also

carry out our own investigations and site inspections to determine whether odours are causing pollution or nuisance and whether appropriate controls are in place and being followed.

Following this increase in reports, we carried out odour surveys and inspected the site on 2 July 2026. At that time, the site was found to be operating in line with its environmental permit and management plans. In response to the increased concerns from residents, FCC informed us that they were reducing incoming waste volumes and carrying out additional odour monitoring in the local area. We also discussed a number of longer-term measures to help manage the increased environmental risks associated with prolonged periods of hot summer weather. During our surveys, compost-related odours were detected beyond the site boundary, but not at a level that we considered to be a nuisance. Nevertheless, we continued to monitor the situation closely.

Unfortunately, odour reports continued to rise throughout July. Many of these reports were received during the early morning and late evening periods, when weather conditions can make odours more noticeable. One factor can be a temperature inversion, where warmer air sits above cooler air near the ground. This can act like a lid, preventing odours from dispersing upwards and causing them to remain concentrated closer to ground level.

Because of the continued reports, we conducted a late-night odour assessment this week. During this visit, we detected compost-related odour at a level that we considered to be causing a nuisance. We then conducted a further site inspection and identified a number of management issues that require improvement.

As a result, we have required FCC to provide details of the corrective actions and additional control measures they are implementing to prevent further off-site odour impacts. We will be carrying out a further site inspection early next week to check that these actions are being implemented and to ensure appropriate progress is being made.

We recognise the impact that persistent odours can have on residents' quality of life and will continue to investigate reports, monitor the situation closely, and take appropriate regulatory action where necessary. Please continue to report odour to our 24/7 freephone pollution hotline on 0800 807060 or online at [Report a smell from a waste facility, industrial site or farm in England - GOV.UK](#).

For all other enquiries email: enquiries_thm@environment-agency.gov.uk (**not** to be used for reporting incidents).