

News Release

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Media & PR, Oakroyd Hall, Birkenshaw, West Yorkshire, BD11 2DY
Tel: 01274 655807/655717

SUCCESSFUL END TO DEWSBURY WASTE BLAZE

A deep-seated fire which has been smouldering at a Dewsbury waste site for one month has drawn to a successful end.

Fire broke out at the site in Ravenswharfe Road, Scout Hill, on 7 February and since then West Yorkshire firefighters have been working around the clock to extinguish it. Three fire engines and an aerial appliance have typically been there every day, tying up hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of equipment.

The fire and rescue service could not afford to let the fire burn itself out due to the proximity of local houses and industrial premises.

However, thanks to the support of the Environment Agency, who have assisted with moving rubbish, and Kirklees Council, who arranged for the demolition of an unsafe structure – both of which greatly assisted firefighting operations – the fire has now been extinguished.

Deputy Chief Fire Officer Steve Beckley, Director of Operations, said: "Thanks to the support of the Environment Agency and Kirklees Council, this incident has drawn to a close considerably earlier than initially feared. This is an example of agencies working together for the benefit of the community.

"I would also like to pay tribute to the firefighters who have worked long hours, often in very difficult conditions and to the Mobilising and Communications Centre staff who have co-ordinated the protracted incident. All have shown true professionalism throughout."

The Chair of the Fire Authority, Councillor David Ridgway, said: "I know that due to the location of the fire, and in the interests of public safety, firefighters have had to be there around the clock, working long hours in difficult conditions. I would like to express my sincere thanks to all concerned for their magnificent efforts in dealing with one of the longest-running incidents in our recent history."

Louis Harvey, Environment Agency team leader, said: "We've been working closely with the Fire and Rescue Service and Kirklees Council on this incident, and we were pleased to have been able to help firefighters reach the seat of the blaze. We are now in discussions with the site's permit holder and investigating further action."

Councillor Mehboob Khan, Leader of Kirklees Council, said: "This was potentially a very serious incident and the swift action of everyone involved is to be applauded. The council's Environmental Services team played a vital role in making sure public safety was not compromised."

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For further information contact Media and PR on 01274 655807 or 655717.