

# BEaR Project Response

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<b>Deadline:</b>		

## Questions and Answers:

The BEaR project has been set up to deliver a long term residual waste treatment contract on behalf of Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton Borough Council.

We would like to clarify that the Covanta proposal and consultation is separate to the Partnership authorities BEaR project. We cannot answer on behalf of Covanta and the answers given below are related to the partnership authorities BEaR Project.

*1. How far down the track are Bedfordshire's unitary authorities in relation to this and other proposals for Rookery Pit?*

The Partnership authorities are currently awaiting a decision from HM treasury on the PFI funding application. Once funding has been approved, the BEaR project will commence the procurement phase of the project. Bidders will be invited to submit their best solutions and all technologies will be considered.

Several suitable sites have been identified for a waste treatment facility in the Marston Vale, following a detailed site selection process. Rookery South is one of these identified sites. Negotiations are taking place to secure an option to purchase this site. Negotiations are also taking place to secure a site at the edge of Brogborough landfill; however the landfill site itself will continue to undergo full restoration as planned.

Offering a site to the marketplace will provide the same opportunities for companies who do not already own a site in Bedfordshire, so that no company has an advantage over another. Bidders can suggest alternative and additional sites if they wish to and no final decisions will be made on which site will be used or what sort of facilities will be built until the completion of the procurement phase in 2011.

The BEaR project team are in regular communication with local Parish Councillors and elected Members in the Marston Vale and a group has been established to ensure genuine dialogue with the local community on this very important issue. Local concerns will be fully explored to ensure issues likely to impact local communities are taken into account during the development of the waste treatment contract.

*2. The potential scale of the plant importing waste from outside Bedfordshire to achieve maximum efficiency.*

The aim of the Partnership authorities is to deliver a solution to treat Bedfordshire and Luton's waste.

*3. The loss forever of a rural landscape and its environmental impact with increased traffic to and from the site.*

A full Environmental Impact Assessment will be undertaken on any site used. Visual impact will also be assessed as part of the planning process.

Proximity to road networks or strategic routes was one of the considerations made when site locations were assessed by the Partnership. Vehicle movements and routing, in terms of restrictions, will be comprehensively assessed at the planning stage for whichever site is proposed.

#### *4. Whether the proposal will act as a magnet for the complete industrialisation of Rookery Pit South?*

The Local Development Framework and Local Plans contain policies concerning locations and amount of land to be released for employment and housing. Further information related to these policies can be sought through the Planning Departments of Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils.

#### *5. The reference to providing surplus heat to NIRAH and the Wixams*

Studies have been conducted to determine the feasibility of exporting heat and power as part of the BEaR Project. We cannot comment on proposals made by Covanta.

#### *6. Will the 'green electricity' be free?*

Electricity 'take-off' from any facility is likely to be fed into the National Grid.

### **Background Information**

#### ***What is the BEaR Project and why is it needed?***

*The unitary authorities of Bedford Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire Council and Luton Borough Council, have joined together to deliver a 25 year residual waste solution for their communities. The Bedfordshire Energy and Recycling (BEaR) Project has been set up to achieve this goal.*

*Residual waste is the rubbish left over once we have reduced, reused, recycled and composted as much as possible. Currently this rubbish is sent to landfill. However, landfill releases harmful greenhouse gases contributing to global warming. Government & EU legislation require by 2020 the UK's household waste sent to landfill has to be reduced to 35% of the levels landfilled in 1995.*

#### ***Recycling remains top priority***

*Whatever technology is chosen, recycling and waste reduction remains a top priority and improvements to recycling services and waste reduction initiatives will continue to be made. The Partnership authorities aim to achieve 60% recycling and composting through various initiatives in the coming years.*

#### ***How will we pay for an alternative waste treatment solution?***

*The three unitary councils have committed to future joint funding to save tax payers money due to costs being split between the authorities. In addition, the Partnership submitted an application to DEFRA for £110 million of Private Finance Initiative (PFI) funding in October 2008.*

*Disposing of residual waste in a greener and more efficient way is expected to save tax payers in Bedfordshire and Luton an estimated £200 million over twenty five years, by avoiding increasing taxes and fines if local councils continue to send waste to landfill.*

#### ***Where will the waste facility be located?***

*An extensive site selection study has been undertaken which involved around 100 sites that may have been suitable for waste treatment facilities. The study looked at criteria such as road networks, proximity to other waste treatment facilities and housing and potential use for heat and power. A ranked list of the 10 best sites was produced, with several sites identified in the Marston Vale. Bidders for the waste treatment contract may also suggest other sites for the waste facility.*

#### ***How much waste would a waste treatment facility process?***

*Current projections indicate that a facility capable of dealing with approximately 200,000 tonnes of waste per year would be suitable for Bedfordshire and Luton's household waste. This amount has been calculated taking into account the extensive housing growth which has been earmarked for*

the area.

**Which waste treatment technology is best for our community?**

National Government does not generally have a preference for one technology, however technologies are considered to be more efficient if both heat and electricity are recovered. The Government would like to maximise energy recovery from waste to offset fossil fuel use.

The Partnership will encourage potential service providers to propose solutions that they consider to be the best solution for dealing with our waste, so a range of different technologies will be proposed. The selection process is likely to take two years and the waste treatment contract is expected to be awarded in 2011.

**When will the waste facility become operational?**

The earliest date that the facility is likely to be operational will be April 2016. This is subject to funding approval from DEFRA, the procedure to choose and award the contract to a service provider and the planning process.

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