

EXTRACT FROM CLP REVIEW REPORT

MATCH TO THE PURPOSE

To identify issues of local concern, provide a channel so those issues can be articulated, help inform and educate local opinion formers, provide a structured arena for constructive debate, update the local community on the progress of the development:

The CLP has delivered opportunities for the CLP members to raise the key issues for the communities they represent and enabled a wide ranging debate about the proposal. The meetings have run over time to ensure that their views are fully captured and all members have been able to participate.

The eleven meetings have discussed a range of issues with all of the following topics covered at least once in the ten months the CLP has been operating:

<i>Building Design and Landscaping</i>	<i>Potential to reduce building size</i>
<i>Noise impact assessment</i>	<i>EfW processes, power production, dimensions</i>
<i>Traffic impact assessment</i>	<i>Carbon credentials of EfW</i>
<i>Air Quality impact assessment</i>	<i>Plume visibility</i>
<i>Waste Sourcing and volume</i>	<i>Community benefits consultation</i>
<i>Combined Heat and Power plans</i>	<i>Bottom Ash processing</i>
<i>Planning application process and Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) process</i>	
<i>Key policies against which the application will be determined</i>	
<i>Public Consultation Strategy</i>	
<i>Content of the Preliminary Environmental Report</i>	

Each presentation has been followed by questions so that CLP members can express key concerns and ask about related topics.

The initial set of issues for presentation was gathered from each CLP member when I recruited them, so from the start the agenda has been agreed by the CLP itself.

At each meeting there is an agenda item for any other business that CLP members wish to raise, and the CLP agrees items for the next agenda at the end of each meeting: Sometimes these are suggested by Covanta as its development work reaches key milestones, or they arise from the questions in the meeting, or from queries raised outside the meeting.

None of the meetings have been less than two hours, and CLP members provide feedback after the meeting if they have further questions. CLP members have recently fed back that the meetings could be improved by allowing time for reflection between sessions and then further debate of issues at the next meeting, and this is an area that I will address from now on.

To better understand and respond to local concerns:

Covanta has presented on all issues and concerns that have been raised and members mainly feel that Covanta has understood those concerns. It has taken action on some aspects where the CLP raised significant concerns, for example conducting further work on reducing the size of the building and stack, and taking additional viewpoints and sensitive receptors for design and noise studies. Where Covanta has been unable to action some of the requests of the CLP in relation to, for example, reducing HGV delivery hours or reducing the throughput of the Project, Covanta has explained the reasons why. In these instances the conclusion has been that the CLP “agrees to disagree” about the impacts on the local community.

An opinion has been expressed at the CLP meetings that Covanta is making a proposal that is unacceptable to the community and therefore does not understand the view that the Project should be located somewhere else. Covanta has made the point that, while it fully understands this view, it intends to make its case based on the benefits of the Rookery South site, and is making every effort to minimise the impacts on the local community as well as to deliver some local community benefits.

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The CLP members are equivocal about the quality and relevance of information provided by Covanta - there is a widely held view that information has sometimes been too technical and needs to be presented in a way that is meaningful for them. Additionally they are not yet satisfied that predictions which suggest that noise, traffic and pollution impacts will be insignificant are correct. They would like testimony from people living near similar facilities and real data from similar projects to be convinced. In light of this feedback Covanta is presently investigating ways in which such testimony can be shared with the CLP.

However CLP members say that they have been given enough information to understand the range of impacts of the project, and feel better prepared to comment on the proposals once they are submitted to the IPC.

I will continue to encourage CLP members to raise issues and ensure that responses to these are provided in a direct way that the panel can understand – it is then down to the CLP members to continue to question until they have the information they want.

To hear how best to communicate with the local community

Covanta has shared its Community Communication Strategy with the CLP. CLP members have commented that they do not feel that the local community has been given the opportunity to say whether they do or do not support the Project. Covanta has committed to provide full and completed information on the detailed proposal at the time of the application's submission to the IPC so that CLP members' organisations can make appropriate representations.

To resolve any questions that may result from the construction and operation of the RRF plant

At this stage of the application process it is not appropriate to comment on whether the CLP will continue with the same membership should the application be successful. Some members may feel they do not want to continue in this circumstance. Should that be the case I would ask for further volunteers and select replacement members to continue representation from a good cross section of the local community.

PARTICIPATION

All members of the CLP make contributions to discussions and ask questions on a wide range of issues. Some research topics so that they are able to discuss some of the more technical issues in more depth, and ask for additional information, but Covanta makes available specialists to make the presentations who in most cases are able to cover these issues in a way that non-specialists are able to understand. In some instances the CLP members have felt that presentations have provided technical data rather than information and they have asked for further presentations on these issues.

There have been some areas where the complexity of the subject have required several inputs – in some cases this is because CLP members needed some time to digest the material in order to ask pertinent questions, in other cases such as building design and landscaping, traffic, noise and air quality impacts Covanta's consultants have been presenting a developing case and sought CLP input to this. The majority of information provided in response to CLP questions has been made at the meeting where the presentation was made; occasionally it has been provided after the meeting and circulated with the notes.

Where the CLP has fed back that they do not feel the information presented at a meeting has been sufficiently in depth Covanta have brought the issue back to the next available meeting to address the specific issues raised.

The CLP regularly communicates among its constituent members via email about queries that they have, which prompts a wide range of added value questions and issues.

The CLP has also debated the CLP process itself on a number of occasions:

After the first meeting a panel member resigned because they felt that being part of the CLP indicated support for the proposal – in response to this Covanta proposed the following addition to the Terms of Reference: "Membership of the CLP does not imply either support for or objection to the RRF proposals" and this change was accepted by the CLP at the second meeting in October 2009.

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At the November 2009 meeting the CLP discussed the issue of participating in the consultation process as a view was expressed that participating in the CLP was helping Covanta to make its case and that this was not in the interest of groups opposed to the Project. The consensus view from this discussion was that the members were there to provide information on issues of concern to the local community to produce a proposal that, should consent be granted, would be as acceptable to them as possible, and so are committed to participating in the consultation process. This does not in any way mean that CLP organisations would not object strongly to the Covanta proposals if that was felt to be appropriate.

At the March 2010 meeting some CLP members stated their serious concern that the IPC would view the CLP process as indicating that all CLP members had received information and therefore supported the proposal when they do not. It was agreed that the revised Terms of Reference did make it clear that CLP membership did not imply support of the Project, and Covanta took an action from the meeting to ensure that this point is made clear in the section 37 Consultation Report that goes to the IPC.

Some CLP members also said at the March meeting that they felt that the depth of concern they felt about the project was not being reflected in the meeting notes. This view was not shared by all members who felt that the notes were an adequate record of the information provided, but I took an action to continue to ensure the notes convey a balanced representation of the depth of feeling CLP members express. CLP members also undertook to review the notes when they were issued to ensure that they were satisfied with their accuracy. No further issues have been raised on this subject.