

Rookery South RRF Community Liaison Panel Meeting 12 Notes

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Monday 19th July 2010, 18.30 – 20.30

Actions from last meeting

Covanta to provide noise data for a comparable facility:

Rachel Ness (RN) suggested that a site visit may be the best way of assessing the impact of a facility. The Merthyr Tydfil CLP visited a range of Covanta facilities in the US. The CLP agreed that it would be helpful for the CLP to have a report from the people who went on this trip

Action Covanta to arrange for contact with the Merthyr Tydfil CLP representatives who visited Covanta facilities in the US with the aim of getting a report on their findings

Additionally it would be useful to have a UK site visit to a similar operational facility, accepting that no facility will exactly match the conditions in the Rookery South area. Malcolm Chilton (MC) suggested that he may be able to arrange a visit to the Lakeside facility near Heathrow which is within a County Park type setting and of a similar size. It is operated by a competitor of Covanta's so Malcolm will ask them if they would provide a site visit for CLP members.

Action Covanta to arrange the site visit if it is acceptable to the operator for September 2010

Covanta to provide air quality data for a comparable facility:

Covanta have identified two sites where air quality data is published and some additional web sites that may be of interest:

There are currently two sites which provide up-to-date continuous monitoring data from their EfW plants. These are:

Veolia Sheffield <http://www.veoliaenvironmentalservices.co.uk/sheffield/pages/emissions.asp>

SELCHP <http://www.selchp.com/emissions.asp>

Some other useful resources providing more general information on emissions are also listed below:

1. Kent Enviropower provide Continuous Emissions Monitoring data from their plant in Maidstone: <http://www.kentenviropower.co.uk/enviropower.asp?ID=59->
2. The Defra report on the 'Review of Environmental and Health Effects of Waste Management: Municipal Solid Waste and Similar Wastes' provides emissions data which is presented 'per tonne' of waste processed: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/statistics/documents/health-report.pdf>
3. The Environmental Agency's 'What's in your backyard?' web resource provides a searchable database of pollution emission sources in the UK including all of the currently operating EfW's. The database can be accessed at: http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/wiybyController?ep=maptopics&lang=_e

Covanta to produce a simpler explanation of how additional noise impacts are calculated and advise of whether there are communities or studies the CLP could refer to about the actual perception of noise increase in similar situations: Still to be provided

Would Covanta consider putting continuous monitoring into place as part of their Visitor Centre activity?

MC said that if continuous dioxin monitoring equipment were available he would consider making this data available, however the technology is not yet available.

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Covanta to review the siting of the continuous monitor to place it back in the north east direction

Covanta circulated a note regarding this issue (see attached) – there is a continuous monitor in Stewartby itself believed to belong to the former Bedfordshire Council and it was agreed that data from this source would cover the concern voiced by the CLP. See note 1 of clarification from Environment Agency attached.

Action Covanta to identify the owner of the monitor and advise if this data is publicly available

Further questions arising

A CLP member had seen press coverage suggesting that the application would be determined locally and wanted to know when the application would be made and to whom?

Covanta said that the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) remains open for business until such time as there is legislation to change the arrangements. The function of the IPC is due to go to the Communities and Local Government Department, and the decision would be made by the Secretary of State.

Sue Marsh (SM) confirmed this was the information she had also had and provided a web site for further information:

The 'news' coming out of central government is that the IPC won't be wound up for at least a year and the timetable looks more like two years. I attach the link for your information:

http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/professionals/news/archive/2010/july2010/2010_07_week_3/150710_1

RN confirmed that the application is due to go in week commencing 26th July 2010. It will then go through a validation process within 28 days. If the IPC are not satisfied with the application they will send it back for further work, but the clock on the consultation period does not start until the IPC has formally validated it. The Local Impact Report (ILR) has to be produced in a 6 week timescale.

Action Covanta to confirm the length of the consultation period

RN confirmed that the feedback provided on the Preliminary Environmental Report by May 3rd is referred to in the Consultation Report that will accompany the application.

Financial savings flow through to Local Authorities presented by Malcolm Chilton

Covanta's strategy in the UK is to provide facilities for a number of local authorities to share, enabling each to gain the benefits of economies of scale from larger facilities. A 600k tonne facility has half the processing costs of a 200k tonne facility which would typically provide a single Local Authority's waste processing. Additionally larger facilities are more efficient electricity producers – a 600k tonne plant has 27-28% efficiency versus 20% from a small gasification plant.

This means that the 600k tonne facility proposed would offer a £50 per tonne saving over a dedicated 160k tonne facility only processing Bedfordshire municipal waste. This equates to an £8 million a year saving to the Local Authority, and well below the current cost of landfill options. Covanta have made this statement public.

Covanta build their tender prices on a "cost plus profit basis" so that the cost efficiencies flow through to local authorities. Therefore the authorities sending waste from further away will have to pay more in transport costs than the authority where the facility is sited.

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The proof of Covanta's case will come when their tender bid goes in – Central Bedfordshire Council has started the procurement process for their municipal waste and Covanta has expressed their interest in tendering.

Questions

Is it true that no local authorities want to talk to Covanta about waste solutions?

No – Covanta is the preferred bidder for Windsor and Maidenhead, is down to the last 2 for Buckinghamshire, is in the last 4 for Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire as well as expressing an interest in Central Bedfordshire's procurement process. These are the target areas Covanta identified at the beginning of the Rookery South planning process. Covanta is also in several other procurements in the country, including in Leeds (1 of the last 2) and Merseyside (1 of the last 2).

What is the status of the Buckinghamshire bid given that there are restrictive covenants on the development at the site?

RN stated that the covenants can be compulsorily acquired under the IPC process. and this is Covanta's intention.

Monitoring of content of waste coming into the RRF and effectiveness of incinerator – percentage of organic material in bottom ash – Presented by Stephen Othen

The facility will monitor waste differently depending on its source:

Where municipal waste (MW) waste is delivered directly vehicles will be inspected on a random sampling basis. Where MW is delivered in bulk from waste transfer stations it will have been subjected to some inspection at the station before being transported. MW will probably be checked three times a day.

Commercial and Industrial waste comes in by lorry and has to be accompanied by a Waste Transfer Note (WTN) stating what is in it – regular suppliers who have proven reliable will be sampled less often than new suppliers, and certain loads will be checked if the WTN gives cause for concern.

In the bunker cranes are used to mix waste so it is more homogeneous and burns more consistently. The length of time the waste is in the incinerator destroys all combustible matter except dense wads of combustible material such as phone books and tree stumps which may not be fully combusted.

All non combusted material will be quenched so it is not burning when it leaves the incinerator, and non fully combustible items are removed by the oversize screen and put back into the EfW process to complete incineration.

Neil Goudie (NG) from the Environment Agency said that a condition of the permit is that operators tell customers what they can and can't send to the facility. See Note 2 of clarification from Environment Agency attached.

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Questions

Local Authorities don't check what goes in black bags, so there is a high likelihood that batteries, asbestos and other dangerous items will get into the waste stream – how does the Covanta facility deal with asbestos, mercury and cadmium and radioactive material?

Asbestos in small quantities would not burn and be removed in the Bottom Ash screen. Any fibres released in the incinerator would be caught in the filter and the bed on top of the filter that stops particles down to less than one micron. Large quantities of asbestos in Commercial and Industrial Waste would be turned away.

Mercury and cadmium are volatile heavy metals and the gas cleaning system is designed to remove vapours. Active carbon is added to remove the metals and this leaves only the steel case for recycling.

Radioactive material is closely controlled and Covanta would not have contracts with this type of waste producer. Smoke detectors however are a source of Cesium 137 but pose a negligible risk.

See Note 3 of clarification from Environment Agency attached.

Action Covanta has radiation detectors on all its US and the Italian facility and will consider putting such a detector on this facility.

Action EA agreed to action this as a specific concern in the permit consultation. EA also agreed to provide evidence that the sorts of monitoring check that EA require are effective in reducing risk from the Clinical Waste sector.

Reponses from Covanta on issues raised by CLP members:

Middlewich Incinerator planning refusal, and Cardiff planning application

RN circulated a note of the Middlewich planning application, reasons given for refusal and the grounds of Covanta's appeal against the refusal.

Questions

This application was handled by locally elected representatives, surely it not right that the Rookery South application should be decided by a Quango?

SM pointed out that the Rookery South application would have gone to the Secretary of State – an elected representative – in the past, and the decision maker in this application will be the Secretary of State. RN said that the Local Authority was still a key consultee in the process, and the LIR is specifically taken account of by the Secretary of State in its decision.

Was Covanta also planning another facility within 4 km of Middlewich site?

No – there was another company proposing a facility that was near, but this was also turned down.

RN commented on the Cardiff Planning approval for Viridor – this facility is to handle waste from Southeast Wales only. Covanta are still bidding for Cardiff waste and waste from all over Wales to be handled by the Merthyr Tydfil facility as a strategic facility. Covanta will be applying for consent at the end of the year.

Health Impact Assessment (HIA) consultation

Covanta had asked ERM, who conducted the HIA, to respond to a CLP member comment that the HIA had not been handled independently. This was circulated to CLP members before the meeting (see attached).

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CLP members who had attended the workshops felt that there had been a prepared list of issues the session was designed to produce, that the facilitator had led the discussion to those issues and any ideas outside that list were not recorded.

RN expressed concern about this view, and agreed to review the process with ERM. She also agreed to make available the list of consultees and those who participated in the HIA process. Members of the CLP who attended the HIA workshops confirmed that, despite their strong reservations about the process, this did not stop them from making their views known to ERM.

Action Covanta to review the HIA process and make available the list of consultees

Is it true that people who responded to press coverage about the HIA workshops were refused entry to the workshop?

RN said that she would investigate this and come back with details.

Action Covanta to provide details of the response to the press coverage about the workshops

Date of next meeting

As the application is about to be made and there will be a period of validation before the application is published, Kate Fairweather (KF) proposed that the date of the next meeting should not be set now, but she would contact CLP members to arrange the next meeting in the autumn.

This was agreed, but that the site visit should go ahead in September – KF to advise possible dates etc.

A CLP member asked what the role of the CLP would be after the application has been made. RN said that it would be for the CLP to determine but that it could provide a forum for questions about the detailed application, the IPC process and actions and the company's position on various aspects.

KF said that there would not be a requirement for monthly meetings for this stage of the process and that the CLP could probably meet every 2 or 3 months.

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Attendance

Nigel Milway	Chair of "Revamp" Ampthill - Apologies
Hugh Roberts	MMAG
Barry Halton	Volunteer with Beds CPRE
Tony Talbot	MD Forest of Marston Vale
Gary Summerfield	Ampthill Town Council
Lisa Frangiamore	Houghton Conquest P. C.
Jennie Thomas	Millbrook Parish Meeting - Apologies
David Cooper	Stewartby Parish Council
Alan Barnard	Maulden Parish Council - Apologies
Peter Neale	Marston Morteyne Parish Council
Richard Franceys	Resident – Substitute Sean Tyrell
Ed Hiam	Resident
Robina Chatham	Resident
Independent Observers	
Sue Marsh	Principal Minerals and Waste Planning Officer, Central Bedfordshire Council
Alasdair McKellar Covanta representatives	PPC Compliance Officer, Environment Agency – Substitute Neil Goudie See below
Kate Fairweather	Independent Chair

Attending this meeting for Covanta:

Malcolm Chilton Managing Director

Rachel Ness Director of Planning

Siobhan Bruce Communications Manager

Presenting

Stephen Othen Fichtner Consulting

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Note from Neil Goudie, Environment Agency re items he clarified at the meeting:

1. The Environment Agency does not routinely require continuous off-site air emissions monitoring from regulated sites. The closed brickworks, operated by Hanson Building Products Ltd, was an unusual exception. When this was operating it was considered an existing installation under the previous regime to the Environmental Permitting Regulation, and they were requested to demonstrate to the Environment Agency, within the issued permit, that their process could meet proposed Air Quality Standards for a number of pollutants that were due to come into force during the lifetime of their permit. The off-site air quality monitoring station was a permit requirement to provide validated data to evaluate the success of requested improvements being made to the process. Although the site made significant improvements to achieve the EA requirements the operator took the decision that future compliance with the permit conditions was unlikely and closed over a year in advance of the EA required deadline.

A new installation, like the proposed Rookery Pit site, will not be permitted if the air emissions modelling, based on the waste incineration directive (WID) emission limit values (ELVs), do not provide adequate headroom with Air Quality Standards (AQS). The requirement for off-site continuous air emissions monitoring is unlikely to be necessary as the stack emissions monitoring equipment will provide the necessary demonstration of compliance with WID stack (ELVs).

2. The use of rigorous pre-acceptance and acceptance checks of incoming wastes is considered a necessary measure at any regulated waste operation, or installation. Operators are required to implement robust pre-acceptance and acceptance checks at regulated sites to minimise the environmental risk from storage and recovery operations. The EA local experience has demonstrated that the number of incidents at waste management facilities relating to poor up-stream segregation can be lowered by the implementation of such procedures. Any issued permit will require these to be in place before operation begins. Although pre-acceptance and acceptance checks do not eliminate the possibility of non-permitted material being received and processed at the site; the associated environmental risk of the insignificant throughput amounts of non-permitted waste material is considered negligible. Robust pre-acceptance and acceptance checking provides a useful feedback mechanism to all stakeholders so that improvements can be made by waste producers to improve source segregation.

The Environment Agency will provide further information, at the next meeting, on the regulatory success of requiring waste operators to have pre-acceptance and acceptance checks at regulated sites.

3. The Environment Agency is responsible in England and Wales for regulating the keeping and use of radioactive materials, the keeping and use of mobile radioactive apparatus, and the accumulation and disposal of radioactive waste. All manufacturers, users and disposers of regulated radioactive sources are permitted by the Environment Agency.

The disposal of non-regulated, mainly low risk domestic sources, such as those contained in some household smoke detectors (Americium 241), are considered a low environmental risk. The throughputs, and dispersion, of non-regulated radioactive sources within an incinerator are likely to be of negligible environmental risk.

The EA will request that the risk of regulated/non-regulated radioactive sources being incinerated is further determined during the permit assessment for the Covanta site.