

Rookery South RRF Community Liaison Panel Meeting 14 Notes

Rookery South RRF Community Liaison Panel Meeting 14 Monday 13th December 2010, 18.30 – 20.00

Actions from the last meeting:

All actions covered on the agenda noted below.

Update on CLP membership and review of Rookery CLP Terms of Reference

Kate Fairweather (KF) contacted CLP members and eight wish to visit the Lakeside RRF facility – Siobhan Bruce (SB) explained that the facility had been very busy, but she would contact KF as soon as she has some proposed dates so that the visit can be arranged.

KF contacted CLP members regarding ongoing membership of the CLP and to review the Terms of Reference for the CLP. As a result two members of the CLP have decided to retire – Nigel Milway and Tony Talbot. KF asked CP members if they had any thoughts about suitable business representatives to replace this interest group. Alasdair McKellar said he would find out who represented businesses on the Stewartby Landfill consultation group – but has since reported that there is no business representative. A developer was also mentioned as a possibility.

Action KF to identify and approach a representative of the business community to join the CLP

The general view is that the Terms of Reference still apply. There was a proposal that the statement “The formation of the panel will also help to build up trust between the local community and Covanta” is more an aspiration than a specific objective.

Action KF to review the wording and come back with a revised version for the next meeting

Details of the EA permitting process and consultation opportunities:

Alasdair McKellar from Environment Agency presented this item – see presentation attached plus examples of a decision and permit.

Questions:

EA plan to advertise the consultation dates and process in the local press and advise Parish Councils so that they can advise their local communities: Can Parish Councils have notice of the plans so that they can advertise in Parish Magazines?

Action AM to provide the link to the consultation page on EA’s website so that this can be included in parish magazines in January – NB this link is included in AM’s presentation on the final slide.

What happens if the IPC say yes to the application but EA have not issued a permit?

The IPC process is to decide if the plant can be built, the permit is for it to operate. Covanta require both to go ahead, and that is why they are progressing both applications at the same time. Sue Marsh (SM) stated that she thought the IPC decision would be around July 2011. RN stated that in Covanta’s opinion the IPC decision will at the earliest in August or September 2011 but is more likely to be at the end of 2011, which is approximately the timescale for the permitting process as well, so both should come together.

Won’t the public be confused about who to make representations to regarding environmental issues with the proposal?

EA have an agreement with the IPC for any comments that are pertinent to the permitting process to be passed to EA for their consideration and vice versa. The EA are investigating the possibility of an information session which may include members of the Local Planning Authority and perhaps the IPC, covering both planning and permitting issues to make this distinction clearer for people.

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How does the EA respond to public concerns?

EA does not usually respond to individuals, but will group similar concerns together and respond to these in the Decision/Permit documents.

CLP Members have attended a presentation by Dr Paul Collett recently, where he showed evidence of major health hazards associated with incinerator technology. What does EA think of these hazards?

AM commented that, in his personal view, Professor Collett's work provided information on a potential hazard, but the risk of this happening as a result of the proposed incinerator was almost non-existent.

Action Covanta to present on the health risks associated with the RRF to the next meeting

When was it decided that incineration is not a dirty process?

Standards have improved markedly since the introduction of the Waste Incineration Directive (WID) which set European standards for emission limits, monitoring and operations. This directive caused poorly performing plants to shut down. The standards were set using data from very large statistical studies from the World Health Organisation and other sources.

A CLP Member reiterated a point they made previously that scientific understanding of what is safe for humans is constantly developing, so it may yet be found that levels that are acceptable today may not be acceptable in the future.

Why do US regulations require radiation detectors, when EU regulations do not?

Action AM to check on this and come back with a response. Completed - response below:

“The answer to why we do not require monitoring of radioactivity as a matter of course in the UK is that the constituents of waste streams are tightly controlled in the UK and the risk of wastes containing significant levels of radioactive material being incinerated in a plant that is not authorised to do so is minimal. 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.

As a result we regulate both radioactive sources and waste, therefore monitoring radioactive sources in waste feed is not considered to be necessary.

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 a incinerator are likely to be of negligible environmental risk.”

Rachel Ness stated that Covanta had included radiation detectors in their proposal because this had been raised as a concern by the CLP.

Covanta's Environmental Permit application process:

Nick Gamble from Fichtner presented on this item – see presentation attached.

Questions:

Does the Health Assessment quantify the probability of health problems arising from the incinerator being in place?

Yes, it is a statistical calculation and the model is reviewed against various guidelines. The comparative data comes from a very wide body of information on the tolerance of humans to the build up of dioxins. It includes vulnerable groups such as mothers with babies.

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Does the model cover the effect on health of the plant not working properly?

No, because the plant will not be allowed to work outside set standards and if it is producing emissions outside the required parameters it will be shut down or the problem will be fixed. There are some automatic shut-down processes; others are the responsibility of local management.

The CLP asked for this process to be more fully explained at the next meeting as they are very concerned about the possibility for the plant to go wrong and cause damage to health of local people.

Action Covanta to present on this aspect of health risks associated with the RRF to the next meeting

What is Covanta's track record of meeting EU Standards?

RN stated that Covanta have a plant in Italy that has been operating the same technology as the Rookery plant since 2003 and this plant has not had any breaches of WID standards at all.

If Covanta has a limited track record how does EA determine if the company is competent to operate this plant?

EA completes a risk assessment. For operators with less experience EA allocate a higher level of inspection hours and data surveys in the first year of operation to ensure the plant is operating as it should.

Update on the IPC consultation process timetable

RN stated that the IPC have appointed three Commissioners, and they are now reviewing the representations made between October and November. Paul Hudson is the lead Commissioner and he has a Planning background. The other Commissioners are a Compulsory Acquisition expert and an Engineering expert.

They are soon to set the date for the January Preliminary Meeting to discuss the process. They will then decide how the examination will proceed and take 6 months to examine and 3 months to take a decision. If there is not a National Policy Statement in place then the decision will be passed to the Secretary of State who will have a further 3 months to take that decision.

During the examination there will be opportunities for people to make their concerns known, possibly at open sessions.

The Preliminary Meeting is now being arranged, and Covanta are obliged to make these arrangements. The earliest possible date for the meeting is 17th January, and the Park Inn Hotel in Bedford has been provisionally booked for an afternoon and evening meeting. About 500 people indicated they wished to attend this meeting, so the venue has to be able to take this volume.

Action Covanta will advise the CLP of developments about the meeting as soon as the IPC make their final decision.

Date of next meeting and items to cover:

The next meeting is due to be in February 2011 – **KF will contact presenters and CLP members to determine the best date.**

The meeting will take a presentation on the Health Impacts of the proposed facility, to include:

- The risks associated with incinerator technology
- Detail on the data sources used for modelling health impacts, how reputable/reliable these are
- What the risks are of major failures in the control of air emissions from the facility

The CLP requested that the presentation should be in terms they could understand given that they are not experts in this area.

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CLP Membership

Hugh Roberts	MMAG
Barry Halton	Volunteer with Beds CPRE - Apologies
Gary Summerfield	Amphill Town Council - Apologies
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- Apologies, Sean Tyrell substituting
Ed Hiam	Resident
Robina Chatham	Resident
Independent Observers	
Sue Marsh	Principal Minerals and Waste Planning Officer, Central Bedfordshire Council
James Dellafield	Member of Sue's team
Alasdair McKellar	PPC Compliance Officer, Environment Agency
Covanta representatives	See below
Kate Fairweather	Independent Chair

Attending this meeting for Covanta:

Rachel Ness Director of Planning

Simon McKee Planning Manager

Siobhan Bruce Communications Manager

Presenting for Covanta:

Nick Gamble Fichtner

Presenting for Environment Agency:

Alasdair McKellar