

# Rookery South RRF Community Liaison Panel Meeting 6

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2010, 18.30 – 20.00

## Marston Forest Centre Seminar Room

Attendance – See attached.

The meeting was chaired by Kate Fairweather, contact details: Phone 0800 035 1556, email [kate@cmcaustmarketing.co.uk](mailto:kate@cmcaustmarketing.co.uk)

### 1. Introductions and actions from last meeting

Two amendments were advised to the Notes of Meeting 5 in December –

Item re hours amended to: “The CLP commented that they are very concerned about the uncertainty in the hours of vehicle movements for the RRF proposal given that that local experience showed a lack of control at other facilities.”

Nigel Milway advised he had sent his apologies for the meeting.

#### **These amendments have been made and the notes reissued to the CLP.**

All actions are to be covered in the agenda or at February or March meetings except request for information on how the APC bags once they have come to the end of their life: Rachel Ness (RN) confirmed that they will be sent to a hazardous waste landfill facility at the end of their operational life (they are reusable over a period of three years).

CLP members had asked for further photomontage viewpoints in Marston Moretaine and Stewartby and Kate Fairweather (KF) confirmed she had passed these on to Covanta who were considering the requests and a response would be provided at the February meeting.

Additionally a request had been made for further sensitive receptors to measure traffic impacts in Marston Moretaine and KF confirmed she had passed these on to Covanta who were considering the request and a response would be provided at the February meeting. **Action CLP members to provide any further sensitive receptor locations by return for these to be included in the presentation in February**

### 2. Details of key policies against which the application will be determined

Kirsten Berry presented this item – see handout.

Questions:

**There was a discussion about opportunities to make representations about the application** – two members of the CLP had asked for a CLP meeting without Covanta and asked why Covanta had refused this: RN pointed out that KF had responded that such a meeting was outside the CLP agreed Terms of Reference and so she could not arrange it, and Covanta had agreed with this response.

RN added that the CLP members were obviously entitled to meet outside the CLP meetings and make representations as part of the consultation process if they wished. Other members of the CLP felt they could arrange a meeting themselves.

**The CLP asked a number of questions about Covanta’s proposal around the issue of where the waste will come from** - This was specifically related to policies on regional waste policy and the Bedfordshire and Luton Minerals and Waste Local Plan First Review (2005) which (to different degrees) preclude permission for treatment facilities that will be primarily importing waste. Covanta considers that the location of Rookery South pit on the western edge of the East of England Region means it has an appropriate spatial relationship with adjoining regions. As waste is intended to be treated at the Facility from outside the Region, the application will consider the benefits and burdens of this importation. Recent EfW decisions made clear that the sourcing of waste for an EfW Facility is

viewed as a commercial matter for the applicant, with each application viewed on its own merits. Covanta considers that more recent national policy and recent decisions by the Secretary of State supersede regional and local policy and, in the case of local policy, this is not surprising as it is now relatively old and produced at a time when it could not have incorporated the relevant national policy objectives. *See Page 4 – 6 of the handout for the sources and exact wording of these policies.*

**Members of the CLP expressed a strong view from their organisations that it was not appropriate for this large facility to be located in Bedfordshire if it would not be handling Bedfordshire Municipal Waste, and that policies encouraged waste to be managed inside regional boundaries.**

**The CLP also commented that there was a possibility, if the Local Authority residual waste contracts were awarded to another company and the Covanta application were approved, that the area could end up with two EfW facilities.**

Covanta responded that its application would be judged by an independent panel on its merits.

Covanta confirmed that it was usual practice for planning applications to be made without contracts for waste being in place, and referred to the catchment area where they are planning to tender as advised in CLP meeting 2 (see map provided at Meeting 2 attached). Had Covanta not been awarded preferred bidder status for the Buckinghamshire contract they would still be putting in this application as there is a very large demand for new waste treatment capacity in the catchment area (approx. 2 million tonnes of residual waste requiring management on an annual basis).

Covanta also confirmed again that they will tender for the Bedfordshire and Luton sub region residual waste management contracts to manage local waste through the Rookery South RRF. Should they be unsuccessful in winning the contract they will tender for residual Commercial and Industrial (C&I) waste within the Bedfordshire and Luton sub region as well for other residual Municipal and C&I waste from the wider catchment area.

Covanta confirmed again that they would not be tendering for contracts to manage residual London waste through this facility.

**The CLP then asked for a clear explanation of the choice of the Rookery South site – why the site had been chosen and what other sites had been considered. They felt it was very important for this to be clear in the public consultation process.**

Covanta explained that they had completed an audit of several hundred potential alternative sites, and were preparing a report demonstrating why Rookery South is an appropriate location and Covanta's preferred site. **Action Covanta to present to the March meeting the detailed criteria applied to each of the sites considered, to list the main alternatives and explain the process that has led to Rookery South being identified as an appropriate location and why it is Covanta's preferred location.**

**The CLP asked if there were policies on protecting the landscape as this is a key issue for the local community**

Covanta confirmed that National Planning Policy Statements 7 and 15 as well as the Marston Vale Forest Plan and other local policies address landscape issues. There is more detail on how the application will address these in the Preliminary Environmental Report which is due to be published on February 12<sup>th</sup>. **Action Covanta to present on this issue at the March meeting**

The CLP felt that the policies were very detailed and needed some time to read the detail and consider further questions – RN confirmed that the Preliminary Environmental Report will give more detail and suggested that if the CLP had further queries on the policy aspects then Covanta would be happy to address them at a future CLP meeting. **Action Discussion of issues arising from the Preliminary Environmental Report to be added to the February CLP Meeting Agenda**

### 3. Update on Public Consultation Strategy

RN updated the CLP on progress on the consultation strategy and draft Statement of Community Consultation (SOCC) provided at the last meeting: NB CLP members not attending the meeting have not been circulated with this document – **Action KF to circulate**

The strategy and draft SOCC had been taken to the Central Bedfordshire and Bedfordshire Borough Council for comment – these had now been received and Covanta are responding to these. CLP members can request copies of the responses from the Council either from the Authorities or Covanta. Covanta will produce their formal SOCC by the end of this week. **Action Statement of Consultation to be circulated to the CLP members by email at the end of the week**

RN advised that the timetable advised to the CLP at the last meeting had now slipped – the planned date for submission of the application is now the end of April 2010. RN provided revised dates:

**NB The dates advised at the meeting have now changed so as to ensure the exhibition is held at Stewartby (venue availability has proved difficult to secure) and to accept the CLP view that the exhibitions should also be held at Ampthill and Millbrook. There has been a knock on effect on other dates – see below for details.**

Key interim dates are:

Preliminary Environmental Report published **19th February**, issued to local libraries and the Forest Centre, plus a Non Technical Summary to be issued to CLP members and some 250 local organisations for comment

#### **Exhibitions:**

Saturday, 6th March, 2010, Millbrook Village Hall 10am - 6pm

Friday, 12th March, 2010, Marston Moretaine Village Hall 10am - 6pm

Saturday, 13th March, 2010, Houghton Conquest Village Hall 10am - 5pm

Sunday, 14th March, 2010, Parkside Hall, Ampthill 10am - 6pm

Saturday, 20th March, 2010 Stewartby Village Hall 10am - 6pm

Permanent exhibition at the Forest Centre

Exhibition details will be notified to local households in parishes within 5 km of the site, including all of Ampthill and Millbrook, by leaflet, adverts and posters at least 2 weeks in advance of the exhibition dates, balloons will be flying (weather permitting) on these dates showing relative heights of building and stack.

NB RN advised that she thought there were technical issues with flying a balloon at each corner of the footprint and may have to fly just two to represent the building maximum height and the stack height balloons. **Action RN to clarify – RN has checked with the specialists and the response is as set out below:**

“There are technical difficulties with flying balloons at each building corner, at the highest building height and the top of stack. This is because the balloons need to be sufficiently separated to avoid them becoming entangled. On this site there is only 'space' to mark the building with one balloon, while allowing for a further balloon for the stack.”

**Site visit** for CLP members 27<sup>th</sup> February – now confirmed

**6 weeks consultation period** on the Preliminary Environmental Report will conclude on 5<sup>th</sup> April.

RN explained that the delay was the result of comments from the Council for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) asking for the building design to be simplified and the need to discuss the proposal with English Heritage. This means that the design to be consulted on in the Preliminary

Environmental Report needs to be amended and this has consequently delayed going out to consultation.

The revised design, with all the photomontages previously provided (but with clearer photos as requested by the CLP), will be presented to the February CLP Meeting.

Questions:

**Can organisations make their own representations to CABE about Covanta's proposed design?**

Yes, representations can be made to CABE direct.

**Where will the exhibitions be held?**

Planned for Marston Moretaine, Houghton Conquest and Stewartby as suggested by the local authorities. However Covanta have not been able to book a venue in Stewartby for the dates planned and were considering the options available to them e.g. other public venues in Stewartby or perhaps at the Forest Centre although this was not preferred. The CLP felt strongly that the exhibition must be in Stewartby – D Cooper said he would investigate options. **Stewartby date now confirmed – see revised exhibition schedule above**

**Why is there no exhibition planned for Ampthill and Millbrook, whose residents will be affected by the proposal?**

Both Ampthill and Millbrook residents will be invited to the exhibition. The CLP felt strongly that both should also be exhibition venues. **Action Covanta will investigate the possibility of holding additional dates for these locations and report back – see revised exhibition schedule above including Ampthill and Millbrook.**

**Could Parish Councils hold an exit opinion poll at the exhibitions?**

RN felt this would be acceptable subject to such polls taking place after attendees had looked around the exhibition.

**The CLP would like to comment on Covanta's draft Feedback Questionnaire to provide an objective view of the questions to be asked.**

RN said she would arrange for the draft questionnaire to be circulated to the CLP for comment. **Action Covanta to circulate the draft Feedback Questionnaire to the CLP for comment**

**Site visit request from last meeting:**

RN confirmed that the Site Visit was feasible as requested at the December CLP meeting, and said that, provided access could be arranged that protected the newt population, and Covanta could resolve technical and safety issues around access due to water depth (too deep for a tractor and too shallow for a boat), the visit would be able to go along the proposed access road route and view the footprint of the building laid out with markers at the corners. The CLP agreed that a Saturday morning would be best for them. **Action RN to confirm which date the technical advisors can make and confirm – visit now confirmed for 27<sup>th</sup> February subject to technical and safety issues being resolved – see revised schedule above.**

**Action CLP members to confirm what they particularly want to see or have explained at the site visit so that Covanta can provide what they want.**

**Some members of the CLP felt it would be useful for local councillors and MPs to come on the site visit.**

RN has planned the 27 Feb site visit for just the 14 CLP members as the CLP had previously only requested the visit for their own purposes.

**Action CLP members to provide their list of people they would like to be invited to visit the site. Covanta to review if they can offer a site visit to the wider audience advised by the CLP.**

#### 4. Plume visibility issue

Chris Hazell-Marshall presented this item – see handout.

Questions:

No questions directly about the plume.

The CLP asked for information about the Isle of Man EfW Facility shown as the building height looks much smaller than the Covanta proposal.

RN said she would find out about the dimensions of this facility and report back.

**Action Covanta to report back on the dimensions of the Isle of Man facility and why this looks smaller than the proposed facility for Rookery South**

#### 5. Date of next meeting and items to cover

Agreed date for next meeting Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February to cover:

Outstanding design/photomontage requests

Traffic issues update

Agreement of issues to be presented to the next meeting following circulation of the Preliminary Environmental Report on 19<sup>th</sup> February – **NB should CLP members feel that they have not had long enough to digest the PER at the February meeting then this item may be deferred to March for presentation in April**

The March meeting (date TBA) will then cover presentations on:

Issues agreed at the February meeting above

Agreement of issues arising from the site visit on 27<sup>th</sup> February (and the PER as required)

The detailed explanation of why Rookery South was selected

The detail from the Preliminary Environmental Report on landscape impacts with reference to relevant policies PPS 7 and 15 and local policies including the Marston Vale Forest Plan

The CHP issue requested at the December Meeting

## **Attendance**

Nigel Milway	Chair of "Revamp" Ampthill
Hugh Roberts	MMAG
Barry Halton	Volunteer with Beds CPRE
Kim Hewlett	Head Teacher Broadmead Lower School – did not attend
Tony Talbot	MD Forest of Marston Vale
Gary Summerfield	Ampthill Town Council
Lisa Frangiamore	Houghton Conquest P. C.
Jennie Thomas	Millbrook Parish Meeting
David Cooper	Stewartby Parish Council
Alan Barnard	Maulden Parish Council
Peter Neale	Marston Morteyne Parish Council
Richard Franceys	Resident – apologies
Ed Hiam	Resident - apologies
Ian Tomkins	Resident - apologies
Tim Hill	Bedfordshire Borough Council - apologies
Covanta representatives	See below
Kate Fairweather	Independent Chair

Attending this meeting for Covanta:

Rachel Ness Director of Planning

Presenters:

Kirsten Berry, Chris Hazell Marshall ERM