

## Rookery South RRF Community Liaison Panel Meeting 2 Notes

# Rookery South RRF Community Liaison Panel – Notes Meeting 2 6<sup>th</sup> October 2009, 18.30 – 20.20

### Marston Forest Centre Seminar Room

Attended: See attached

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

### Issues from the last meeting – actions

KF confirmed that Gary Summerfield and Tim Hill had been invited to join the CLP as agreed by the CLP at Meeting 1.

Presentations on this agenda are for items requested by the CLP at Meeting 1.

KF reported general feedback from the first meeting: Generally fairly satisfactory, more time required for questions/input from the CLP, mid meeting coffee break requested. Agenda this time has been adjusted to meet those requirements.

Some members of the CLP had also felt that their views about the design of the building and its impact on the landscape had not been given due regard. RN explained that Covanta is in the process of giving serious consideration to the requests of the CLP on design matters. The design process has already been very robust and lengthy. As such the team was able to confirm that many of the design issues raised by the CLP had already been explored, this does not mean however no due regard has been given to the CLP suggestions. For example, and as suggested by the CLP, Covanta are continuing to investigate whether the visible height of the building could be reduced through deepening the pit (noting that this is significantly constrained by the hydrogeological conditions of the site). This work had been commissioned by Covanta a week before CLP Meeting 1 and would be concluded in time for presentation at the next CLP meeting. The programme for submitting the application had been delayed by about a month to enable this important design test to be robustly worked through. Work was also in hand to look further at the CLPs suggestions for natural coverings on the building, bunding and landscaping – aspects which had not been covered at Meeting 1 due to lack of time. All of these design iteration results will be brought back to the next CLP meeting.

RN re-emphasised that Covanta would not fix the design for environmental impact assessment purposes until all options had been fully investigated, and that this review was delaying the planning application date (now expected to be submitted in November/December 2009). RN said that Covanta will continue to present work in progress and is listening to the CLP views.

The CLP said that they wanted to see a representation of the building showing the impact on the view of the Vale. **Action - Covanta to provide at next meeting**

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The CLP asked what they feel is a key question – why is the building so big? RN said that some of this is to do with capacity that would be addressed at this meeting, but also to do with process design and arrangement of equipment in the plant, to be considered at a future meeting.

**Action - Plant and process design added to list of issues for presentation by Covanta to a future meeting**

### **Waste sourcing and volume (materials presented attached)**

Kirsten Berry (KB) from ERM presented on national, regional and local waste tonnage, how much is recycled or composted and therefore how much is residual waste potentially available for treatment at a facility such as the Rookery South RRF.

KB advised the proposal is driven by the need to manage residual wastes arising within Bedfordshire authorities and Luton but recognising cost efficiencies meant there was a benefit to bringing waste in from beyond these authorities. KB provided data on the cost efficiency of EfW plants and explained that there is a cost benefit with increased tonnage – for this plant on average 585,000 tonnes per year over lifetime of plant. However there is a limit to how far waste can be transported cost effectively and this depends on tonnage amounts and mode of transport. .

National and Regional policy has shifted from constricts of self-sufficiency and the proximity principle. Modern policy is more holistic, integrating waste management and energy generation, but with increased emphasis on the waste hierarchy, which affords a role to energy from waste once reduction, re-use and recycling/composting have been achieved and to reduce the need for landfill.

Covanta are bidding for handling of residual municipal waste (MW) from local authorities and residual commercial and industrial (C&I) waste contracts to fill the capacity of the plant. Currently, most of this MW waste is going to landfill/other facilities in Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire and Kent. The primary catchment area is Bedfordshire (MW and C&I waste) and Buckinghamshire (MW only). They then have a secondary catchment area covering Milton Keynes, Northamptonshire, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Windsor and Maidenhead. It is estimated that some 2 million tonnes of residual wastes arise within this total study area. Currently Covanta is bidding for MW contracts with Windsor and Maidenhead (this was formerly part of the Buckinghamshire MW contract) Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes (with residual wastes from South Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes only proposed to be treated at Rookery South).

Waste collection authorities have recycling and composting targets to achieve. Appropriate provision is made available to separate these materials, leaving the residual wastes for alternative treatment or disposal. Commercial waste collection companies collect C&I wastes and will separate out recyclables. Both collection bodies have a financial drive to separate out as much recyclable material as possible: Revenue is gained by selling on materials and costs can be cut through reducing the amount of waste that goes to landfill or further treatment.

In Bedfordshire the BEaR project is a result of the requirement for local authorities to put residual waste treatment capacity in place. Covanta are planning to bid for the tender to provide this treatment and believe that they have an environmentally sound and cost-effective option.

MC confirmed that Covanta have no interest in taking London waste to the Rookery South plant. He also confirmed that the plant is not planned to expand if successful – Covanta is planning a

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number of facilities across the UK which are geared to the optimum size for the local streams. It is very expensive to expand them later.

The plant will receive waste that has already been sorted on the doorstep or factory, so there will be no need for a recycling facility at the plant. However the process will recover both ferrous and non ferrous metals and Covanta will recover the bottom ash into a secondary aggregate. Approximately 96% of waste being processed at the Rookery South RRF will have value recovered from it, with only 4% being disposed to landfill.

The CLP asked what alternative sites to Rookery South had been considered. **Action – Covanta to present the analysis of sites to a future meeting, added to issues list**

### Traffic impacts (materials presented attached)

Simon Davis (SD) from PBA Associates presented on transport issues.

Covanta are still assessing options to use rail transport to the plant albeit design work has confirmed that rail link cannot be provided on the Rookery South pit itself. The CLP are very keen to see rail as part of the transport plan, both to reduce road congestion and to secure the line which they feel is underused by passenger traffic.

MC commented that the CLPs view on this will be taken into account.

Action – Covanta to inform the CLP of further progress on rail options

The results of traffic forecasting work shows that, when operational, there will be 356 2-way HGV and 174 2-way car movements per day based on a 6 day week and with the majority occurring between 8am and 8pm. Covanta could arrange to reduce their traffic at rush hour times, but otherwise HGV traffic would be fairly evenly spread across the day. HGVs would be restricted to suitable routes by existing weight and height limits and by an HGV routing strategy which would be enforced by Covanta.

MC explained that each vehicle and driver would have card ID so individuals could be identified and disciplinary action taken against anyone using unsuitable routes.

RN said that the CLP would also act as a route for the community to identify unacceptable behaviour by drivers.

The level of HGVs seems large, but in the context of current and planned traffic changes would not make a large difference according to the traffic model used, which takes account of all proposed developments and the improvements to the A421. SD made some comparisons to illustrate this:

Previous (2002) proposals for landfill/restoration at Rookery South (where agreement was reached with the highway authority) forecast 484 HGVs' per day 2way (RRF 356).

2-way HGV flows following the 2008 reopening of the Stewartby landfill access to Green Lane were 320 peak per day, 230 per day March average, with an allowable maximum of 1200 on any one day, and 800 averaged over a month.

O&Hs' mixed use Stewartby development either side of Broadmead Road would be likely to generate 6,500 vehicles in total per day 2-way, more than ten times that of the RRF (530).

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The CLP felt that the increase in traffic from the plant must produce extra congestion in an area where there are already huge problems for residents, and asked for data from the model for the specific local junctions around Stewartby and the A421, plus the railway crossing on Green Lane, showing current traffic levels, forecast without the plant and forecast with the plant in operation. SD noted that the A421 improvements would reduce congestion along the route which would also be likely to reduce the level of diversion of traffic to other routes which currently occurs. MC confirmed that Covanta will seek to facilitate an upgrade the level crossing on Green Lane to address potential safety concerns arising from an increase in HGV traffic.

**Action – Covanta to provide model detail in layman’s terms to the CLP before the planning application is made**

SD said that traffic in the construction phase will be an average of around 73 HGVs in and out per day or less and around 200 car movements in and out. However there will be a 3 – 4 month peak in the middle of the 36 to 40 month construction phase when these rates will be doubled.

SD gave some examples of the likely increases in traffic flows from the RRF on local roads in the area and the environmental impact of this in accordance with relevant guidance which, given the sensitivity of the routes in question, would be "minor" for both Green Lane and the "old" A421 south of Green Lane.

The CLP asked if HGVs would put mud on the roads and leave wind blown debris; this has been a problem in the past.

MC said that there would be no mud on tyres as the access to the site is all hard standing. Vehicles would be sheeted to avoid spillage. Loads are emptied inside the tipping hall under slightly negative pressure conditions so there should not be any wind blown debris from the plant.

### **Date of next meeting and items to cover –**

The design and landscaping update will be provided at **meeting 3 on 20<sup>th</sup> October 18.30 at the Forest Centre.**

The CLP agreed the following were its key issues:

- Where will waste come from, what type of waste will it be, is it truly non-recyclable waste what is the annual waste production of the UK now plus projections (covered)
- Will there be any recycling capability at the plant (covered)
- Volume of lorries planned, effect on road cleanliness/congestion/ leisure traffic, aggregate effect of this project plus NIRAH and Forest Centre traffic, affect on village life (covered, further detail requested)
- Potential to use rail for deliveries (covered, to be updated ongoing)
- Visual and noise impacts, plans to mitigate the natural environment and enhance green spaces (meeting 3)
- Why this site was chosen and what alternative sites to Rookery South had been considered, could it be put closer to urban areas where the waste is being produced
- Why is the building so big (capacity issue covered, process and equipment arrangement for a future meeting)
- Will the plant expand if it is successful (covered)
- What is the relationship between this project and Bear, will approval for this project result in a rumoured series of waste processing development at the Rookery site (to address this in part Covanta has suggested that BEaR be invited to present to the CLP in light of the roadshows it is presently undertaking in the local area and their offer to present to local groups)

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- Is EfW an efficient way to produce energy
- What are the benefits to the local community of hosting this plant, is there any planning gain

These issues to be addressed at future CLP meetings.

### Membership of the CLP

Nigel Milway	Chair of "Revamp" Ampthill	Attended
Hugh Roberts	MMAG	Attended
Barry Halton	Volunteer with Beds CPRE	Attended
Kim Hewlett	Head Teacher Broadmead Lower School	
Tony Talbot	MD Forest of Marston Vale	Attended
Gary Summerfield	Ampthill Town Council – Margaret Wright sub	Attended
Lisa Frangiamore	Houghton Conquest P. C.	Attended
Jennie Thomas	Millbrook Parish Meeting	Attended
David Cooper	Stewartby Parish Council	Attended
Kay Lynch	Wootton Parish Council	Withdrawn
Alan Barnard	Maulden Parish Council	Attended
Richard Franceys	Resident	Attended
Ed Hiam	Resident	Attended
Ian Tomkins	Resident	Attended
Tim Hill	Bedfordshire Borough Council	Apologies
Covanta representatives	See below	Attended
Kate Fairweather	Independent Chair	Attended

Attending this meeting for Covanta:

Malcolm Chilton Managing Director, Rachel Ness Director of Planning

Presenting to the meeting:

Kirsten Berry – ERM, waste sources and volumes

Simon Davis – PBA, transport and access issues