

Rookery South RRF Community Liaison Panel Meeting 1 Notes

Rookery South RRF Community Liaison Panel – Notes Meeting 1 22nd September 2009, 18.30 – 20.15

Attended: See attached

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

Agreement of the Terms of Reference for the CLP – Terms of reference were agreed with the caveat that the CLP could meet more frequently than 2 – 3 months, particularly relevant in the coming weeks when Covanta plan to consolidate their planning application.

Membership issues - The CLP asked on what basis the members had been selected: KF described the process: From the list of volunteers she had selected community groups representing each parish within 5 miles of the Rookery South site, some local organisations and closest neighbours (within 3 miles). In this way she had recruited to the 14 that is the maximum to allow each person a good chance to give their views.

However, after completing recruitment KF had been contacted by Amphill Town Council with a request to join the CLP, pointing out that they were the only local elected body not represented. The Town Council had not volunteered a representative so KF had selected Revamp Amphill as a community group for the town. KF felt she had to come to the CLP meeting with the request for another member as it would increase the size of the meeting and perhaps reduce the share of the floor each one could get. However one member of the CLP, a resident from Amphill, had had to withdraw due to ill-health and so there was a spare seat which could easily be offered to Amphill Town Council. **The CLP agreed that Amphill Town Council should join the CLP** – that this was only fair and reasonable. **Amphill Town Council has nominated Gary Summerfield, who is also a Central Beds Councillor.**

KF then asked the CLP to consider a request by Cllr Tim Hill of Bedfordshire Borough Council to join the CLP. **The CLP agreed that it would be appropriate to have an additional member from the Local Authority.** MC commented that once the planning application is made it may not be appropriate for a councillor to attend as there could be a conflict of interest.

Action KF to invite two new members to next meeting – completed 23/09/09

Building design consultation - Alistair Kratt LDA Design, Alan Lamb AEW Architects presented current design ideas, showing mock-ups of how the building could look in the landscape, explaining how the design was influenced by the need to reduce the impact for the surrounding area.

The general feeling of the CLP was that the building was too large and too visible. Whatever colours or landscaping was used to reduce its impact they would not be enough to make it acceptable

CLP members asked for consideration of the following:

- Dig down and put more of the building below ground level
- Use planting to hide the building under a natural covering

The CLP agreed that they want to be consulted about this issue and all other issues, not presented with a “done deal”. Covanta advised that the design and environmental impact

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assessment process was an iterative one and there are opportunities both before and after the application is made for the design to be refined.

Covanta agreed to come back to a later meeting with responses to these points together with more information about landscaping plus other examples of buildings Covanta has in the US and other similar facilities in the UK.

The CLP also asked for a mock up showing this plant together with the NIRAH building to see the full impact of new developments on the landscape. Covanta undertook to investigate what could be done.

The designers confirmed that the height of the plant floor to roof is determined by the size of the equipment within the plant not the capacity, so that even if the capacity were lower it would be less wide not less high. The stack would be lower at a smaller capacity.

Covanta confirmed that power cables from the plant would be run underground, not on pylons.

Action: Covanta to present on further developments to include noise reduction and landscaping strategy to October meeting. This now scheduled to be the only item for October 20th CLP meeting.

Air quality/public health - Chris Hazell Marsall ERM presented the health impact assessment, providing a range of supporting documents. Key points made were:

The Health Protection Agency has updated its position statement on Incinerators: "Modern, well-managed incinerators make only a small contribution to local concentrations of air pollutants. It is possible that such small additions could make an impact on health, but such effects, if they exist, are likely to be very small and not detectable."

No smell from waste on site as it will be kept in the tipping hall and air from the hall will be constantly pulled into the plant at slightly negative air pressure. The waste is constantly mixed to avoid generation of anaerobic conditions.

The Vale sometimes experiences a meteorological effect – an inversion layer, caused by cold air at ground level trapped beneath a layer of warmer air above - in these conditions there is limited dispersion of emissions. The Environment Agency require the assessment to take data over 5 years to take account of the worst case weather conditions and assess impacts under these conditions, as these will tend to lead to the greatest ground level impacts. The modelling using this worst case data must demonstrate that no air quality standards will be exceeded due to pollutants coming down to ground level. It was noted that during inversion layer conditions, the air is very still with very little vertical or horizontal movement and therefore emissions will tend to stay at height in the air and be brought down to ground level when the wind picks up. The Environment Agency has to approve the impact assessment and usually ask for more headroom than even the worst case weather experienced as an added reassurance.

Emissions of dioxins from incinerators are very substantially reduced as the understanding of dioxin formation process and improved technology has dramatically reduced outputs from the mid 90's and state of the art technology is very effective at minimising emissions. The plant will meet all of the Waste Incineration Directive emission limits and in most cases will be substantially below these. In planning Covanta have to submit an Environmental Statement to accompany their application which assesses those environmental impacts which have the potential to be significant. Unless the application and Environmental Statement demonstrates that there will be no significant impact on human health over the

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life of the plant at the expected emissions then permission will be refused. This is then followed by an Environmental Permit application to the Environment Agency which will need to demonstrate that there will be no significant impacts on human health and ecological sites at the permitted (highest) level of emissions.

The CLP asked a number of questions:

- What would happen if the plant monitoring showed emission in excess of permitted levels? The EA would require the plant to close, although they would allow Covanta to try to address the issue, as a breach in emission limits would only occur in the event of a specific failure at the plant. During normal operations the plant will operate well within all emissions limits.
- Will the area smell when the plant is not running, during maintenance closures? Only one of the three streams would be closed at any one time, so waste would always be moving. Therefore waste odours will not escape from the process during maintenance.
- Will all lorries delivering waste go straight into the hall? Yes, all waste deliveries will be directed to the tipping hall and whilst on occasion there could be a queue on the access ramp to the tipping hall this would be for short periods of time and lorries will be covered.
- Why doesn't Greenpeace give incinerator technology a clean bill of health? There is always a potential hazard with any pollutants – however taking into account the emissions from the plant and the background levels of these, the total amount of pollutants to which people would be exposed will be at a level where health impacts are not significant, based upon Environment Agency guidance. This is recognised by various Agencies including the Health Protection Agency, Environment Agency and Department of Health – position statements from these Agencies were provided to the panel.
- Should residents agree to any further increase in pollutants in the area? It is important to recognise that landfill causes pollution as do other ways of dealing with waste. The waste remaining after recycling/composting has to be handled in some way and Energy from Waste is accepted by the relevant regulatory Agencies as being a suitable and low risk way of doing so. It was also noted elsewhere in the discussions that all air quality standards will have to be achieved when considering the impact of emissions from the plant and the existing baseline conditions. The air quality standards are set for the protection of the most vulnerable members of society (the very young, very old and infirm).
- How are emissions targets controlled if you don't know what is going into the waste stream now and into the future? We have a pretty good understanding of what will be in the waste stream the plant will accept and have made assumptions as to how the nature of the material will change, for example through increased recycling levels. The plant is carefully designed to respond to such variations and absorb substances, including heavy metals from batteries for example – changes in levels of substances are detected by constant monitoring of the exhaust. The fly ash produced is then tankered out to specialist landfill sites.

The CLP asked about the capacity of the plant and the transport issues.

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Action: Next meeting to take presentations on the source and types of waste, volumes and detailed traffic impacts.

Date of next meeting and items to cover – The meeting agreed that the detail of where the waste was to be sourced and details of volume of waste to be handled, plus traffic impact issues should be provided to **meeting 2 on 6th October, 18.30.**

The design and landscaping update should then be provided at **meeting 3 on 20th October 18.30.**

The CLP agreed the following were its key issues, most to be addressed at the next two meetings:

- 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 over 30 years (meeting 2)
- Will there be any recycling capability at the plant (meeting 2)
- 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 (meeting 2)
- Potential to use rail for deliveries (meeting 2)
- Visual and noise impacts, plans to mitigate the natural environment and enhance green spaces (meeting 3)
- Why this site, could it be put closer to urban areas where the waste is being produced
- Will the plant expand if it is successful
- 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
- 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.

RN from Covanta confirmed that they would not be processing clinical waste at the plant.

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Attendance

Nigel Milway	Chair of "Revamp" Ampthill	Attended
Hugh Roberts	Chair of MMAG	Attended
Barry Halton	Volunteer with Beds CPRE	Attended
Kim Hewlett	Head Teacher Broadmead Lower Sch	Apologies
Tony Talbot	MD Forest of Marston Vale	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	Attended
Alan Barnard	Maulden Parish Council	Attended
Richard Franceys	Resident	Attended
Ampthill Park House	Resident	Withdrawn
Ed Hiam	Resident	Attended
Ian Tompkins	Resident	Attended
Covanta representatives		
Malcolm Chilton	Managing Director	Attended
Rachel Ness	Director of Planning	Attended
Paul Cole	Engineering Director	Attended
Kate Fairweather	Independent Chair	Attended

Presenting to the meeting:

Alistair Kratt LDA Design, Alan Lamb AEW Architects – Design and landscaping
Chris Hazell Marsall ERM - Air quality and public health