

Dear Sirs

## **Proposed Rookery South Resource Recovery Facility – Preliminary Environmental Report**

I am writing on behalf of the Bedfordshire Councils' Planning Consortium, which is a grouping of Parish and Town Councils, primarily from Central Bedfordshire, to advise of our strong objections to the Covanta proposal to develop the Rooker Pit South site for an energy from waste generation plant. Our objections can be summarised under the following headings:-

### **Location**

The proposed site is, we understand, greenfield land and therefore totally unsuitable for such a development. Furthermore, being a rural site, which is a rapidly developing haven for wildlife, well away from current and proposed centres of population, our organisation would contend the proposal is fundamentally flawed as it fails to explain how the majority of the surplus heat will be utilised in order to make such a development sustainable in the 21st century. Suggesting that the NIRAH project (which increasingly looks dead in the water) and the Wixhams development (slowly progressing and mainly beyond the accepted distance for efficient heat supply transfer) will take the surplus heat, looks highly questionable as a plank for justifying this proposal. The obvious location for such a development of this size is one that must be in close proximity to a large centre of population, which generates the volume of waste necessary to feed such an operation.

### **Scale**

For many decades, Bedfordshire has not only coped with its own waste but substantial quantities of other people's rubbish, so is it unreasonable for its residents to expect that, with the ever increasing move to recycling, land fill sites becoming full etc, that this county could look towards only having to 'deal with' its own waste? What we have before us is a proposal that can only function by importing substantial volumes of other people's waste, not a prospect that is acceptable to the members of our organisation. The size of the building, 75% of which will be above the edge of Rookery Pit and therefore a true blot on the landscape, located as it is close to the Country Park, is just unacceptable for that location.

### **Infrastructure**

The upgraded A421 has been designed to cope adequately with existing traffic volumes plus some growth. We understand that this element of growth most certainly does not allow for the many hundreds of vehicle movements per day that this proposal would involve in using the A421. Surely only with clearly identified and adequate road capacity could this proposal be considered for acceptance? As this is patently not the case - - - - - !

### **Safety and Environment**

There is a very worrying lack of clarity regarding the disposal of the resulting fly ash, which is of course a hazardous waste. For local people this is clearly of major concern but Covanta, apparently, could not be bothered to think this one through! Similarly, there is an unacceptable lack of long term safety data and clarity relating to the emissions from such a plant's chimneys. The environmental impact of such a plant, its associated traffic generation, its emissions etc on the immediate and wider rural areas is, in our view, inadequately covered. Could this be because past experience of such plants has either been within or proximate to **large conurbations** as opposed to a **rural district** like Mid Bedfordshire?

### **Lack of Community Engagement**

The Bedfordshire Councils' Planning Consortium members representing those villages located in the near vicinity of the proposed incinerator site have indicated that this has been

an ongoing issue since the possibility of this development first emerged and there has been a distinct lack of openness and consideration shown to the residents of those local communities that would be most directly affected by such a development. Our organisation is appalled by this unacceptable lack of consideration to local people.

In summary, our organisation is totally opposed to this development in Rookery Pit South.

Would you kindly acknowledge receipt of this communication.

Yours faithfully

*Alf Murphy*

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Chairman - Bedfordshire Councils' Planning Consortium