

ASPLEY GUISE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk:
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John Saunders
Chief Executive
The Infrastructure Planning Commission
Temple Quay House
Temple Quay
Bristol
BS1 6PN

26th April 2010

Dear Mr Saunders,

Covanta Energy Proposal for a Waste Combustion Plant at Rookery South, Bedfordshire

We are writing in relation to the above project which we understand has been lodged with the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) and for which an application is expected to be submitted to IPC by Covanta shortly. We further understand that in determining whether or not to accept an application a key consideration for IPC is whether the consultation undertaken by the applicant at the pre-application stage has been adequate.

Aspley Guise Parish Council does not believe that the consultation undertaken by Covanta has been adequate and we therefore urge IPC not to accept an application from Covanta for this project until further necessary consultation is carried out. The retendering process for its waste services currently being undertaken by Buckinghamshire County Council, who are expected to be one of the main customers for the proposed project, should allow ample time for the further consultation needed to be completed.

Aspley Guise Parish Council is aware that there are serious concerns amongst local residents close to the site of the proposed plant that the consultation undertaken by Covanta has not been adequate. In addition to these general concerns the Parish Council has a specific concern in relation to the severe impact that the proposed project would have on traffic flows in the area of Aspley Guise and there has been no consultation by Covanta to date on this vital issue with either the Parish Council or our local residents.

Much of the waste to be processed at the proposed plant is expected to be transported by road using HGV's and many of these HGV's to and from the proposed major customer will use the new M1 Junction 13. We have seen a copy of a recent transport presentation to the project's Community Liaison Panel but this has no consideration of the impact of this increased traffic on Junction 13.

Evidence submitted by the Highways Agency during the Public Inquiry into the dualling of the A421 from Bedford to J13 indicated that the new junction layout would at peak times have just sufficient capacity to handle the anticipated peak traffic flows, excluding the projected traffic from the proposed waste project. Further the adequate functioning of the new J13 is dependent on the further dualling of the A421 from J13 to Milton Keynes and funding for this future project must now be in doubt given needed cutbacks in public spending.

The impact of increased traffic from the proposed project through J13 could significantly increase congestion at the junction at peak times which would in turn give rise to increased traffic flows through neighbouring villages and congestion further afield at key junctions in Milton Keynes.

While there may be possible solutions to these problems the fact of the matter is that thus far there has been no consultation by Covanta on the impact of the proposed project on Aspley Guise and as stated above we urge IPC not to accept an application for this project from Covanta until the further necessary consultation is completed.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Pickering
Chairman