

Rookery South ERF Community Liaison Panel Meeting 8 Draft notes

June 11th 2018, 18.30 - 19.45

Marston Forest Centre, Station Road, Marston Moretaine, Bedford, MK43 0PR

In attendance: Representatives of: Bedfordshire Against Covanta Incinerator (BACI), Maulden Village, Brogborough PC, Marston Moretaine PC, Millbrook PC, Cranfield PC, Stewartby Water Sports Club, Marston Vale Forest Trust (MVT);

Neil Goudie and Emma D'Avilar- the Environment Agency;

Roy Romans–Minerals & Waste Planning Authority;

Tom Koltis, Tony McShane, Judith Harper and Neil Grimstone - Covanta;

Marie Sirven- Veolia.

Apologies received from: Sue Marsh(MWPA);representatives of Bedford Borough Council, Lidlington residents, Houghton Conquest PC.

Facilitator: Robin Treacher – robin@quantumpr.co.uk. Tel 07818 515770

NOTES FROM THE MEETING

Disclaimer

Membership of the CLP does not imply either support for or objection to the ERF development. Rather it is an opportunity to facilitate the flow of information between Covanta/Veolia and the local community."

The Terms of Reference for the Rookery South ERF Community Liaison Panel (CLP) as revised in October 2016 can be found on the facilities' website (rookerysouth.covanta.com).

Introductory remarks

The facilitator explained that Stewartby Parish Council was currently appointing a replacement member for the CLP and that Lidlington had appointed a new representative. He welcomed Bedfordshire Against Covanta Incinerator (BACI) to the meeting, and asked if the representative wished to explain anything further; he declined.

The facilitator added that as the Environmental Permit was currently the subject of a Judicial Review (JR) there were limitations on what the Environment Agency (EA), Covanta and BACI could debate at the meeting. Once the JR was over, the EA would present a briefing note on the Permit to the CLP and invite CLP members to nominate up to 10 specific items. It would then discuss these at future CLP meetings during the construction phase.

Construction update

Covanta presented the latest construction update news starting with two distinct phases: the low level restoration scheme (LLRS) and the construction of a new access road to Rookery south pit.

BACI asked Covanta if it had agreed the details of the LLRS with Millbrook Power. Covanta said it had. The scheme entails a great deal of earthworks and drainage work. It had begun in April and was completed in October 2017.

BACI asked if the new access road was completed and whether it would be shared by Millbrook. Covanta said it was about two weeks from being finished. It was now surfaced with tarmac and had kerbing. The road would be shared with Millbrook Power .

Covanta gave an update on the Section 278 Highways junction which is being finalised with the Highways Agency. The two lanes will include a third lane for traffic turning right; a cycle path, footpaths and crossing points. New signage will also be added.

SWSC expressed concerns that the Water Sports Club would be affected by the road works and asked when it would be taking place.

Covanta noted that technical approval has been given and completion of the legal agreement with the Highways Authority is awaited. Work will commence about a month afterwards, likely to be in July and August. Covanta added it thought it would take about 6 weeks to build.

A plan of the new site access junction with Green Lane was shown to CLP members.

Marston Mortaine PC asked whether the original plan was to have been to improve the junction in April. Covanta agreed but said it had become delayed. The PC then asked how much notice would be given ahead of the roadworks starting and Covanta said about two weeks'.

Outstanding matters

Covanta said there was no update on Public Rights of Way as the strategy has not yet been completed. This would be a future topic for the Agenda. It was also reported by Covanta that the launch of the electricity subsidy scheme has been put back along with the deadline for registration (it had been April 2018).

Employment

Covanta said the site would employ about 320 people during the construction phase over a period of 39 months; the equivalent of 1,040 person-years of construction employment and that almost 100,000 person hours have been completed already – without any injuries.

Timetable

A slide was displayed giving an overview of when the major activities within the construction phase were due to start and finish (Design/Access road/civil construction/Engineering and procurement/Mechanical and Electrical (M&E) installation/ cold commissioning/ hot commissioning and operation and testing.

Covanta explained what was involved in the cold commissioning phase and the difference between that and hot commissioning which would follow. During hot commissioning, energy would be produced and operational site rules would apply. During the M and E

stage, Covanta would agree a commissioning plan with the Environment Agency. It would be at the operational and testing stage that the plant would be handed over by the building contractors.

BACI asked if Covanta has agreed contracts for the construction. Covanta explained that the contracts are all wrapped up via a single overarching EPC (Engineering, Procurement and Construction) contract that has been agreed.

Covanta explained that future works (managed by the code of Construction Practice) would be: Monday-Friday 7am to 7pm (excluding Bank Holidays) and Saturdays 7am to 1pm.

Additional information

An explanation with photographs then followed about how an unexploded wartime device (found in Kempston) had been taken to the site by the army the previous week for a safe controlled explosion. It was standard practice for the police and army to identify an open space isolated from properties to undertake the detonation and Rookery South had been selected. Covanta did not have a choice but was happy to co-operate.

Marston Mortaine PC asked if a decision has yet been taken as to whether IBA (incineration bottom ash) would be treated on site or be taken off-site for treatment. Covanta said it was keeping its options open but the most likely outcome would be to have it treated off-site while retaining the right to treat it on-site.

Newsletter

Covanta said it had not prepared a draft of the next Covanta Newsletter for this CLP meeting as it was not appropriate to produce another yet as there was not a lot to report since the previous one, but wanted to run the ideas past the CLP. Covanta said it expects to produce a newsletter quarterly and that it would have the autumn edition draft ready for the next CLP meeting.

Covanta undertook to ask the facilitator to circulate a draft of the next newsletter to all CLP members for comment when it is ready (expected to be end of June). A slide was presented showing the proposed ideas for the next edition which included:

- Improvements to the Rookery South web-site and relaunch.
- Myths vs. facts to address misconceptions – Covanta identified some examples.
- Employment plan and how to apply for Rookery ERF jobs.
- EfW vs. landfill – the facts, following a BBC Radio 2 interview (Jeremy Vine show).
- Financial contribution to the Bedford and Milton Keynes waterway Project.
- Construction update including new road junction.

Millbrook PC asked how the next newsletter would be distributed and was told by it would be via Royal Mail post. The facilitator said it costs more but is more reliable although a Liddington resident had reported to him her copy had not been delivered. Unfortunately it was too long after the delivery was due to take place to fully investigate although he was able to confirm the person's address appeared on the mailing list.

When asked how many newsletters had been produced so far Covanta said that there had been two; one was a statutory notification to Stewartby residents regarding the start of the works, and a full newsletter to all the parishes.

Millbrook PC also asked for a few days in which to make comments on the newsletter. Covanta said it was aiming to distribute the newsletter by the end of June.

The facilitator undertook to notify CLP members when the next edition was "in the post" so they could report any potential non-deliveries.

Cranfield PC suggested the electricity subsidy scheme should also feature in the next newsletter stating that the message will need repeating several times before it is picked up by everyone, and that it should also appear on the updated web-site.

Millbrook PC asked if the newsletter could be distributed to the Ampthill area. Covanta said Ampthill was outside the "consultation and subsidy scheme footprint" but that the newsletter would be available on the website.

The Maulden resident asked for the wording on the web-site be improved and described it in places as being a clumsy use of English and used a phrase such as "does not pose a significant threat" when applied to emissions, which suggests that there is some risk. For example in the commentary regarding Public Health England. Covanta explained that it is not legally possible to say "never" but undertook to look again at the way some things are described.

Use of names/organisations. Notes or minutes.

There was a debate initiated by CLP members over the use of names (of CLP attendees) and organisations in the notes of meetings and whether the notes should be referred to as minutes. There was also a discussion about the publication of the notes/minutes and what the "approval" process should be. It was considered it very important that the information is on the [Rookery South] website but that organisations, not people's names are published, as this is disseminated via the parish Councils. Some members felt the notes didn't always convey how they felt about a particular subject and what could be heated discussions, especially when they were being critical. They were concerned this could be mistaken as giving the project passive approval.

Marston Mortaine PC said if the notes were sanitised they were little more than a PR exercise.

The facilitator reiterated that the Terms of Reference made it clear that being a CLP member did not imply support (or opposition) for the plant.

MVT asked if a description of what the CLP is could be included.

Cranfield PC felt that a two week period from the issuing of the notes for suggesting amendments was too short. It was also disappointed not to have received a reply to a request to change a note relating to BACI's application to join the CLP. There were mixed views whether the record of the meeting should be referred to as minutes or notes.

Some members felt amendment suggestions should be considered up until the next meeting of the CLP when the notes would be formally "approved as a correct record" by those who had attended the previous meeting.

Note from the facilitator

There was no clear consensus on what the outcome of the debate should be. There were several CLP members who were absent whose views also need to be considered. I have, therefore, drafted here a suggestion for consideration ahead of adoption as follows.

- *Individual names from community based organisations represented on the CLP should not appear in the notes - only the organisations they represent. Organisations giving information to the CLP (such as the Borough Councils, Covanta, the Environment Agency etc) should also include the name of the representative. This is the style of these notes.*
- *The facilitator to accept and consider amendments up until the week before the next meeting – at which the previous meeting notes are approved. Amendment suggestions can also be made at the following meeting prior to approval.*
- *The record be known as notes and not minutes. Any CLP member can take notes during the meeting as these would be as valid as those taken by the facilitator.*
- *The notes are not published (eg Rookery South web-site) until after the following meeting has approved them.*
- *The extract from the Terms of Reference making it clear that membership and participation in the CLP does not imply support or opposition towards the project should be published with the notes of each meeting.*

I will take comments and suggestions on this approach and then attempt to find a consensus which can be supported by the CLP. Starting with these notes (above).

Further questions

BACI asked if there are any areas where Covanta/Veolia still need to reach an agreement with Millbrook Power. Tom Koltis said there were some items still needing agreement outside of the planning process such as joining utilities – so more agreements are needed.

The Environment Agency was asked about the relationship between the Permits for each facility. Nigel Goldie (Environment Agency) said Permit decisions in such circumstances are taken in parallel. Millbrook Power's application will take into account the Rookery South ERF project.

Event in Stewartby village hall

Roy Romans (MWPA) made mention of a meeting in Stewartby Village Hall on June 21 when Bedford Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be asking questions of the Environment Agency and Covanta about the development. It was noted that this was not a public meeting – members of the public could not ask questions directly – but would

be open to public to attend. The chair would take questions from Councillors only. Roy Romans noted that Central Bedfordshire has agreed to do something similar.

Environment Agency information

Emma D'Avilar (Environment Agency) reaffirmed its commitment to present the key elements of the Rookery ERF Permit once the Judicial Review had been concluded and to work with the CLP over forthcoming meetings to address "the top 10 concerns".

Next meeting

It was decided to hold the next meeting at the Forest Centre on Monday, September 17th starting at 6.30pm. Robin Treacher to make the necessary arrangements.

Items for the next agenda

- Environment Agency's overview of the Rookery ERF Permit conditions – enforcement and consequences for non compliance.
- Update, Electricity Subsidy scheme.
- Review draft of the autumn edition of the Covanta newsletter.

The meeting ended at 19.45.