

## **Rookery South ERF Community Liaison Panel Meeting 12 Notes October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019, 18.30-21.00 hrs.**

**Marston Forest Centre, Station Road, Marston Moretaine, Bedford MK 43 0PR.**

### **In attendance**

**CLP members:** Representatives from Lidlington PC; Marston Moretaine PC; Houghton Conquest PC; Millbrook PM; Cranfield PC; Wootton PC; a local resident; Forest Centre; Bedfordshire Against Covanta Incinerator (BACI); Councillor Sue Clark CBC;

**Observers / presenters:** Covanta: Tom Koltis, Judith Harper, Neil Grimstone, Jack Stitt; Environment Agency: Neil Goudie, Emma D'Avilar; Council minerals and waste team: Roy Romans, Anita Taylor.

**Facilitator:** Robin Treacher ([robin@quantumpr.co.uk](mailto:robin@quantumpr.co.uk))

**Apologies for absence:** Cllr Tim Hill

**Resignations and appointments:** None.

### **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 the developer 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 facility's website ([rookerysouth.co.uk](http://rookerysouth.co.uk)).

**Adoption of the notes from meeting number 11:** The notes were circulated in advance of the meeting. Three queries were raised (namely vehicle movement numbers; Environment Agency attendance and the identification and eligibility of an electricity subsidy applicant). It was agreed to only include an exchange between BACI and Covanta over vehicle movements. This was added to the notes before final circulation. There were no other changes given that BACI withdrew some previous suggested amendments to the notes. The notes were agreed by the meeting, with the exception of BACI.

The facilitator also pointed out the attendance sheet showed who was a "member" of the CLP and who attends as an observer or presenter (to answer questions or give presentations). This was agreed.

**Q Wootton PC asked why Veolia doesn't attend any more.** Veolia does not have any part in the construction but is on the "waste supply side" of the equation and the project is in the construction phase. Covanta is also representing the lead construction company (HZI) and introduced Jack Stitt a Covanta employee who leads the construction management team.

*Q Houghton PC asked if Veolia could be invited so CLP members could ask them questions*  
Robin Treacher said Veolia gets the agendas, invites and notes and Tom Koltis said he didn't want to waste Veolia's time by attending unnecessarily. If CLP members make known their questions for Veolia, he would either ask they attend or obtain answers from them.

**Question to the Environment Agency (see slide pack for Q and As)**

Emma D'Avilar answered the questions previously asked of the Agency (attached at the end of the presentation slides) and said that if CLP members wanted more details they should simply ask, and she would be happy to try and assist. This could include matters to do with incidents, enforcement or monitoring, but as the topic is so large, they need specific questions to address. As the facility is now in build stage there is little regulatory effort until commissioning. The EA is continuing dialogue with the site but does not need to attend every meeting. Questions to be directed via the Facilitator and they will be answered in writing.

There were some supplementary questions to those asked and answered in the presentation. As follows:

*Q Houghton Conquest PC asked if the Agency is happy there is no pollution going on during the construction phase.* The Agency does not regulate the construction phase.

*Q Does the Agency rely on the Council to monitor the site during the construction phase.* The Agency encourages the operator to put monitoring in place during construction but does not routinely inspect any construction sites although it has certain powers and rights in this area. The Agency makes a risk-based assessment. It does not have the resources to check everything including water courses. There is a responsibility on the contractor to have appropriate procedures to monitor and then report pollution incidences. Covanta added that its contractors also have a duty in this area.

*Q Lidlington PC asked if there is a risk that the contractor won't self-report incidents.* If they don't report them, it goes against them and is very serious. Large companies know their responsibilities. Water companies are an example of where self-reporting takes place. The Agency targets its resources at those who don't have self-reporting procedures and they get more checks. An example of an incident which needs self-reporting might be a large diesel spillage during a delivery. The Agency made an unannounced visit to the Rookery site in August and was reassured that good procedures were being followed compared to other sites. The Agency had no concerns – in fact it got a "good feeling" procedures were being followed.

*Q Wootton PC asked about a waste shipment unrelated to Rookery and Covanta which was stopped by the Agency. The export might have gone ahead without interception. It was only discovered at the port prior to export. What governance is there on the bulking up and shipment of materials by Veolia to Rookery? Can we rely on the signing off process?* The onus is on self-regulation. Emma D'Avilar was not able to comment on the transfer and shipment abroad as it is handled by a different section of the Agency. The regulation and

monitoring of waste when it is bulked up is done before it arrives on site – it goes all the way back up the waste stream. It is in Covanta’s interest to check what waste it is accepting, and it has a quarantine process if it thinks the Waste Acceptance Protocol has not been followed. Covanta added that waste inspections will take place at the facility and this will include visual checks on the tipping hall floor. The EA does carry out inspections of the bulking up at waste transfer stations. The transfer stations have permits that are checked by the EA so all upstream supplies to the Rookery Site are regulated.

**Q** *BACI asked if emissions could be permitted for up to 4 hours to a limit of 60 hours in any one year, does that mean the plant could continuously pollute for 15 consecutive days.* The Agency explained that could not be the case. The root cause would need to be identified and remedied after the first exceedance. Any repeat violations would need to be for different reasons. The causes must be identified and put right. Failure to comply would result in the plant being closed.

**Q** *Houghton Conquest asked if breaches were reported automatically via the computer controlling systems or are they done manually?* Reporting must be within 24 hours and this is done via email. Monitoring procedures are maintained by external contractors approved by the Agency. They check the equipment is working properly. An automated system would require the Agency to have many different software systems as there is no one system all companies must use. Any breach is reported by the control room leader at the time. Failure to report within 24 hours is a serious offence.

**Q** *Lidlington PC asked how Covanta will reveal its stack emissions and how does it do it for the Dublin plant.* Covanta said there was a legally binding agreement (Section 106) to publicise emissions and these will be published on the web site and at the visitor centre – perhaps other places as well. Roy Romans said the agreement also states Covanta must consult the CLP about the matter so the public can see and understand the data. A matter for a future CLP meeting. The Dublin method of disseminating the information is on its website. The figures will be reported to the Environment Agency quarterly.

In response to the question about emissions Emma D’Avilar commented that the permit controls CO emissions and not CO<sub>2</sub> although they appreciate that this is a climate change matter.

**Q** *BACI asked for clarification about the figures for emissions from the stacks – as there are three stacks should these be added together.* No. It is the average from the three stacks not the total which is the pertinent figure.

**Q** *Lidlington PC asked who the Green Investment Bank is.* It is now the Green Investment Group. A company specialising in investment in green industries.

**Matters arising and outstanding questions to Covanta (see slide pack).** The slides cover Temporary Extension of Working Hours; construction lorries numbers in July 2019 and prevention of heavy metals reaching Stewartby lake.

Jack Stitt explained under “extension of temporary working hours” concreting and associated work fell into two categories.

- Power Floating slabs – concreting which once started cannot be stopped.
- Work not intended to last for 24 hours but the extension allows contractors to make up for time lost. This might be part of an evening or at weekends.

The number of trucks during concrete pouring is that needed to feed the batching plant; deliveries do not take place overnight. The figures are for numbers of trucks not movements, so movements are two times this.

**Q** *Lidlington PC asked for an example of how time is lost.* It is usually because of weather. High wind prevents the crane from being used in steel erection. Up to 15% of time can be lost – about a day a week. Noise monitoring is in place. It was agreed that this is primarily a cost issue.

**Q** *It looks like Bridleways have been left out. If the upgrades work for cycle ways they generally work for bridleways.* Covanta said footpath upgrades were planned but the specification needed for bridleways is higher and will be discussed with the Council's Rights of Way Officers prior to finalising the strategy. This has not been ruled out.

**Questions from site visits (see slide pack).** These answer questions on stack design; bottom ash treatment; use of rail sidings and footpaths.

**Rookery South Newsletter.** Covanta reported this latest newsletter was with the printer and that it would be distributed to 9.7k homes in the area soon. He said he had contacted 15 parish councils in the area (more than the eight in the consultation footprint) offering an electronic copy of the newsletter to them for distribution and about half had accepted. He was waiting for more to respond. Stewartby PC had asked for a bespoke newsletter/update which is being prepared. The newsletter is about to go on the Rookery website. Distribution methods include the Royal Mail.

**Q** *Millbrook PM asked if all the new houses in the area were now included in the distribution.* Royal Mail periodically update its data base and that was the most reliable source.

**Q** *Houghton Conquest PC repeated their suggestion that Covanta asks the developers. He suggested Parish Councils with Facebook pages also be encouraged to publish the newsletter to reach newcomers to the area.* Contacting all the developers does not make the best use of time. The numbers have gone up from c.6,800 to 9,700 in recent months using Royal Mail.

### **Construction update (see slide pack)**

**Q** *The Environment Agency asked if boiler testing, including steam blowing, would take place before hot commissioning.* Yes.

**Q** *Lidlington PC asked if the local roads could cope with large construction vehicles.* Jack Stitt confirmed there would be larger than usual vehicles during the Mechanical and Electrical (M and E) phase of construction and undertook to give notice when this might be. He said the local roads were category 4 and capable of taking the vehicles. The load is spread over many axles.

**Q Millbrook PM asked for assurance road damage would be repaired.** Covanta agreed it would and Roy Romans added there is a requirement in the s.106 agreement to an annual survey\* to check on road conditions and for reporting and making good damage attributed to the construction works.

*\*[Post meeting note: 3 years annually post construction and only if necessary remediation works have been undertaken.*

### **Three month lookahead and photographs of the site and video (see slide pack)**

A video is being made of the site under construction which will be updated quarterly. It can be viewed using the link <https://youtu.be/BbVGBHC4cNk>

A programme of regular site visits will continue.

### **Monitoring the Development Consent Order**

Roy Romans from the combined councils' Minerals and Waste Team introduced a new member of staff – Anita Taylor – who will take a lead responsibility for the Rookery ERF site on behalf of the local authorities. She has worked for Roy in the past and has good experience of the waste industry and has worked for a waste management company.

She has visited the site and will have a key role – including liaison with local environmental health officers.

Roy said a position of Monitoring Officer was still vacant in his department, but he hoped to fill it in November.

Roy reported on two complaints since the last CLP.

- A noise complaint from Stewartby which he couldn't follow up because there was a lack of information including date, time and type of noise.
- A query about night-time working and lighting. Covanta agreed the site is well lit but not overnight – only when work is taking place, other than the walkways and parking area. There is also warning lighting for aircraft on high cranes.

Roy said he was happy to investigate complaints.

**Q BACI asked if the application for temporary extension of working hours would mean more lights at night.** Not throughout the night just on an as-and-when-needed basis. There would not be all night "task" lighting, just "safety" lighting.

**Q Wootton PC asked if planning permission was required for a building for the storage of Incinerator Bottom Ash (IBA).** Yes. The DCO authorises infrastructure for the processing of IBA at Rookery, however it allows for outdoor storage of IBA and IBA derived products, and therefore does not include an aggregate storage building. However, since the Environmental Permit requires that IBA storage takes place in a fully enclosed building, planning permission is required for such building.

**Q BACI asked if this would mean a change to the DCO.** No. Roy Romans said there would be the need to apply for separate permission, but it could be a standalone permission and not

be part of the DCO, or a variation. Covanta said it would be for safe storage before being taken off site.

**Q** *BACI asked where the IBA would be taken to.* Most likely location would be in the East Midlands area. Fly ash (in sealed containers) would probably go to a licensed location north of Birmingham. These vehicle movements are already contained within the DCO.

**Q** *Millbrook PM asked if the IBA and fly ash would leave the site by reutilising vehicles which had brought waste in.* Covanta said that would be ideal but that was an efficiency gain it had not yet secured.

**Q** *Marston Moretaine asked if Covanta was confident the quality assurance testing of the concrete was very good.* Jack Stitt said it was, and all QA testing had been independently overseen.

### **Employment plan (see slide pack)**

**Q** *BACI asked if the EU employees would be counted differently after Brexit.* No, as UK and EU employees are counted separately. Wootton PC pointed out that the number of employees under contract can change quickly.

**Q** *Lidlington PC asked how many staff the plant will employ when it is operational.* About 60.

**Q** *BACI asked if the operational staff will be in the same ratio of locals to others as during the construction phase - i.e. 5-10.* No – it will probably be much higher. The spread of construction staff represents the specialist and short-term nature of the work. Permanent staff if not already local are more likely to move into the area to live. A ‘meet the buyer’ event is currently being arranged to attract local businesses.

### **Any other question session**

**Q** *Marston Moretaine asked how reliant the facility would be on plastic (calorific value) and what impact a reduction in plastic waste would make given the current drive to reduce single-use plastics.* Tom Koltis said the plant does not require plastics in the waste stream. Although plastic has a high calorific value it is also corrosive, and it is not an ideal fuel source. The plant will run more efficiently without plastic but can accommodate it with ease.

**Q** *BACI asked that given the recent royal visit bestowing Internationally recognised ‘Queen’s Commonwealth Canopy’ status protecting forests, would that make any difference to Covanta’s plans.* No.

**Q** *BACI suggested Covanta does not care.* Tom Koltis said the company would operate to the very highest environmental standards. The Canopy status and the plant were not incompatible. Judith Harper added there was a legally binding undertaking (section 106) to contribute towards planting in the Marston Vale Forest.

**Q** *Wootton PC asked that Veolia be invited to the next meeting to explain the waste stream which will be feeding Rookery – from collections to bulking up and onto delivery.* The

Environment Agency said this would helpfully expand on the point it made earlier in the evening. Covanta to ask Veolia to attend and make a presentation.

*Q Marston Moretaine expressed concerns about the adequacy of local feeder roads especially in Marston and the capacity of the M1 Junction 13 given the increase in housing and other developments in the area.* Applications for future developments must take traffic commitments for developments already consented into account. Roy Roman said O and H properties is looking to build a further 5,000 houses in the years to come and transport was a big issue. Highways England is consulting on the issue. Current models take Covanta and everyone else's current requirement into account. Things will change in the next 15-20 years and will need to take into account the Oxford/Cambridge expressway.

*Q A resident asked what impact the news about a new depot for refuse collection vehicles and cleaning vehicles would have. This is planned for Brogborough landfill site.* Roy Romans said it was for 16 years to accommodate vehicles associated with the Central Beds Council waste contract using existing buildings. Vehicles would park at the site overnight. Highways England are aware. It represents a relocation of vehicles rather than additional vehicles.

#### **Next meeting**

It was agreed to schedule the next meeting for **Monday, January 20<sup>th</sup> 2020 at the Forest Centre starting at 6.30pm.**