

Rookery South CLP Meeting 20 Notes

Monday 17th January 2022 – 6.30 pm, Rookery South offices

Present:

CLP Members – Representatives from: Bedfordshire Against Covanta Incinerator; Houghton Conquest PC; Brogborough PC; Marston Moretaine PC; Marston Vale Forest Centre; Millbrook PM; Wootton PC; Lidlington Resident; Cllr Sue Clark (SC)

Observers/Presenters – Rookery South Ltd: Judith Harper (JH), Neil Grimstone (NG); Roy Griffin (RG); Environment Agency: Neil Goudie (NG), Emma d'Avilar (Ed'A); CBC: Anita Taylor (AT); Guest: David Ball (Millbrook Power/Drax)

Facilitator: Bob Fisher (rmpfisher77@gmail.com)

Apologies for Absence: Cllr Tim Hill, Jon Shortland (BBC); Roy Romans (CBC); Cranfield PC; Stephen Sleight (BRCC); Sally Law (Stewartby PC)

NOTES FROM THE MEETING

1. Introductions, CLP Ground rules & Apologies

The CLP welcomed David Ball from Millbrook Power.

John Symonds has now stepped down from the CLP and Sally Law will attend in his place.

2. Approval of Notes from Meeting 19

The notes from Meeting 19 were approved, with one amendment from **Cllr Sue Clark** in Section 5 – Emissions Data: 'people would like to drill down into more detail and *that it is better to be transparent and demonstrate control*'; change to: 'people would like to drill down into more detail and that ***it is better to demonstrate transparency.***'

3. Matters Arising – Q & A

BF had previously circulated Rookery South CEMs Report (Nov 21) and Emissions Display proposals. Post-meeting questions had also been forwarded to RSL; responses can be found on the slides for this meeting.

Q: clarification regarding site traffic – specifically, who was in control of the transport strategy and who had access to the CCTV footage at the entrance to the site? Concern was expressed about Veolia's ability to enforce HGV routes given the current shortage of HGV drivers, and about monitoring frequency.

A: CCTV footage of traffic at the site entrance is available to the Council on an App which CBC was able to access and would monitor and enforce compliance with the routing strategy. In addition, CBC obtains data on vehicle movements in and out.

Q: Is Veolia still liable for 75% of the business coming into RSL, now that the ownership of RSL has changed? Noted that 25% of deliveries to the site did not appear to be under Veolia's control.

A: there had been no change to the ownership of RSL - it was still 40% Covanta, 40% Green Investment Group and 20% Veolia. However, the ownership of Covanta has changed; it is now owned by a Swedish investment fund, EQT, and no longer quoted on the New York Stock Exchange.

He confirmed that around 75,000 tonnes out of 550,000t (~20%) would be from two main suppliers: Cawley, who will be coming in from Luton & Wellingborough and using their own trucks, and Geminor, bringing waste from Wales using third-party hauliers. Cawley would be around 10%, Geminor 7%. The remainder capacity would be “topped up” by a small number of local firms when waste supplies were low, such as at Christmas [see slides in General Manager’s Update].

Q: What is the current number of LA deliveries to the site?

A: There were between 140 and 150 visits per day in and out of the plant, mostly in large trucks containing waste (coming in) and ash (leaving the plant), which represents half the limits set by the DCO permission.

4. General Manager Update (NG) - see slide 2

- The plant had just completed its commissioning phase. The number of tonnes of waste was now ramping up to full operational production. The facility would be running flat out until the summer, at which time a period of site maintenance would be carried out. The plant is currently exporting 60 megawatts (60,000 kilowatts) to the grid per hour, which is a significant amount of power.
- Cawley’s started supplying waste over Christmas; Geminor would be starting deliveries in early February.
- Waste mix was still roughly the same: mostly LA waste, and some (Cawley’s) local commercial waste.
- The plant has also been taking ash away since August 2021 – approximately 1200 truckloads of incinerator bottom ash (IBA) – which has been delivered to Johnson’s Aggregates in Ilkeston, Derbyshire. In addition, 4,400 tonnes ‘fly ash’ has been sent in “powder tankers” to a treatment facility in Walsall.
- The Community Fund is now fully funded and open to receive applications; any local community group would be able to apply for funding through Grantscape. There were 5 representatives on the panel; RSL was looking for a further two members. Members of the CLP were invited to put forward any expressions of interest to join the Community Fund panel.
- The Community Energy Initiative is being launched. Grantscape would be writing to registered applicants advising them of the process to receive the subsidy amounting to £100.
- The Heras fencing alongside the access road had been removed and the fencing along Green Lane will be removed in due course. Work on upgrading footpaths would start next month and these should be open by March or April 2022.
- The Visitor Centre is in the process of being equipped, the design having been approved, and would be available by the middle of the year.
- Heating Initiative – focus is on Cloud Wing (Hanson’s Reach development) as they are the most advanced.
- The Local Suppliers Initiative, which encourages local firms within a 20-mile radius to bid for work, has been advertised in newspapers and – more successfully – on Linked-In. There are now around 30 potential local suppliers.
- RSL made charitable donations to Keech Hospice Care and to two Bedfordshire Autism groups at Christmas time.

Q: how many jobs at the plant had been taken by local people and how many were full time?

A: 55 new positions had been created by Covanta Operations team. These were full-time employees. Additional local jobs had been created for lorry drivers.

Q: with regard to the upgrade in the footpaths, what access was there for horses, and would riders need permission to use the paths.

A: while the paths had not been planned for horses, they would be wide enough for horses to pass along the side.

They will not be adopted as bridleways by CBC, as this change would need a process outside of the DCO; it would be a matter for the Countryside Access team at CBC, with the cooperation of the landowners (O&H Properties).

Q: when would the plant formally be transferred from HZI to RSL and has HZI's involvement had ceased?

A: HZI's involvement in the plant would continue for a while. The plant had completed its takeover test but not yet been transferred (see Plant Manager Update slide).

5. Plant Manager Update (RG) – see slides 3-7

- (slide 3) Final testing had been completed but still needed to be validated. The takeover certificate was due to be issued on 19th or 20th January backdated for 16th. At this point, the Operator will contact the EA to inform them that the plant is in operation.
- (slide 3) This is followed by the Availability test (see slide detail), a 12-month test of normal operations. Within 5½ months, there would be a Performance test to see if the plant achieves the levels of performance as stated in the contract. HZI would have an extended warranty for 3 years and might need to return to the site to carry out snagging or defect work.
- (slide 4) The Emissions data slide provides a high level summary of emissions for November 2021 (on the left-hand side), while the right-hand side shows the splash page on the Emissions Information page, including a website link to a far more detailed (WID) report. The WID report also contains charts which show the performance of the plant with half-hourly and daily readings. The data in the report is obtained from Emissions monitoring data, which goes to the EA. This information will be updated on a monthly basis, together with an explanation of how to interpret the tables. This was the same info as shared with the EA which removed any potential for conflict.
- (slide 5) On 5th Jan 2022, at 3.30 pm, there was a report from a member of the public of 'black smoke' coming from the stack. RSL checked the emissions and stack data at that time, and it was asserted that there was no black smoke, but rather a *light refraction event*. Other ambient conditions, such as reflection and backlighting, might also create the impression of coloured smoke.
- (slide 6) Covanta has placed advertising for opportunities at RSL to attract local suppliers.
- (slide 7) Examples of the range of vehicles (HGVs) that will be seen visiting the plant.

Q: would the Performance Test include testing the Penstock valve?

A: the Penstock valve would have a functional test, to see that it closes and seals correctly. The Performance test would be checking electricity output or lime consumption, with a view to environmental performance, whereas Penstock testing is a functional test to ensure it's sealed.

RSL was thanked for providing this detailed data, which had been produced in response to a request made at the previous CLP meeting.

Q: the website mentions removal of 99.5% particulate matter. However, it was the smaller particles people needed to be worried about; would the report include a percentage of the PM 2.5s being removed to would give a more complete picture?

A: it would be necessary to do some analysis of PM10s and PM 2.5s. These are not routinely reported to the EA, but RSL could consider publishing.

Q: what would the Disab tanker be used for and would this be a permanent part of the on-site plant?

A: there are a number of tanks on site, such as the Settlement Tank, which are used to collect silt/liquid. These need to be emptied using the Disab and the silt/liquid is then sent to the appropriate waste treatment plant. There would normally be a Disab on site one or two times a week.

Q: [referring to Emissions] to what extent did exceedances occur and how long did they last?

A: The slide shows an individual 10-minute CO exceedance in the details page on the right-hand side (on the WID Report link). On any given day, 5% of the valid readings for CO may be above the relevant ELB for the 10-minute interval as stated in the Permit and on the slide.

Q: referring to sources which suggest when you get vaporisation around the stack, and condensation occurs on the minute particles, which causes a coloured cloud.

A: the temperature is 140 degrees C at stack top and the plume will contain moisture, especially at this time of year; hot air meeting cold air always results in condensation. On dry warm days the plume will be absent. The photo in question was taken at 7.30 am on a classic 'shepherd's morning' – (see info re refraction and reflection)

Also, if viewed from another angle, the plume might appear black.

6. Millbrook Power (David Ball) – slides 8-9

- Millbrook Power will start construction this year and is currently discharging planning conditions with the Council. There are 4 construction packages (slide 9). There will be a very small operations team of 1-2 people on site, split shifts.

Q: (i) What levels of construction traffic might be anticipated and how much of this was likely to travel along Green Lane?

(ii) how does Millbrook Power propose to keep local people informed as to what was going on. Would they set up a similar CLP as much wider communications would be needed. For example, Millbrook Power would need to organise its own leaflet drops to local households to inform the community of what was going on. Has the plan had been discussed with BBC and/or CBC and had there had been any dialogue with local Parish Councils?

(iii) Regarding the electricity sub-station situated next to the pylon [on Station Road] had East-West Rail been contacted about this?

A: Construction traffic would be coming through Rookery South via Green Lane. 140 people on site at peak construction times. Peak lorry numbers of around 50 per day are anticipated in 2023 (associated with concrete pouring). Millbrook Power would be coordinating vehicle movements closely with RSL and will work closely with them to

avoid peak times. There will be 3 over-sized loads arriving via the A421, probably at night.

Communication regarding the construction commencement had not yet taken place, but the company would be in contact with those organisations.

The sub-station in question was actually placed 2-3 pylons further up. Drax/Millbrook Power would be speaking to the National Grid team. [Post meeting note: DB provided a plan showing the pylon location, which was forwarded to SC]

It was observed more pre-engagement work was needed and that there was potential conflict with East-West Rail, which CBC would pick up on.

7. Information Boards (JIH) – slides 10-11

- Two Information Boards were proposed under the Footpath and Signage Strategy (slide 10): one located to the north of the site near the Green Lane access and one to the south, near the lake. These boards would feature information about the plant and the surrounding wildlife.
- More information about the actual plant had been requested. A ‘mock-up’ of a proposed board was presented (slide 11). JIH asked the panel for suggestions as to content and where the additional board should go.

Q: The picture of the plant shows the plant stack emitting white vapour; might people be alarmed if the plume was not white, given the previous discussion?

A: Noted

A bird's-eye view of the plant, showing the layout of the plant was suggested.

8. Regulator & Local Authority Feedback

The EA had conducted an inspection of the site with little notice on 15th December 2021; they were conducting validation testing of the gas flues. It was noted that RSL was a different site now, with operations moving in and construction teams moving out. There had been few complaints about the plant to the EA since the last meeting, apart from the comments about the plume in January. The EA concluded that pre-operations conditions had been met and compliance is on time.

The Local Authority (planning) reported that they had conducted several visits to the plant and had had a number of meetings with the RSL team. Some schemes still need to be completed but overall, they are happy that these were in hand. No substantiated complaints had been received; the Rights of Way issue has been discussed and a plan is in place. There are ongoing DCO planning requirements during the life of the site; information will need to be submitted at regular periods during the year. Information would be disseminated publicly.

Q: CBC website and the RSL page used to be more detailed; the information is currently somewhat fragmented or has disappeared.

A: CBC had reduced content to ‘streamline’ it due to the large quantities of information and agreed to feedback the requirement for missing information. CBC was currently in the process of moving to SharePoint for digital data storage. This process was likely to take a few months but members could email AT to request documents.

The planning documents were available on the Rookery South website but as Covanta had also migrated from Box to OneDrive the links may need to be refreshed.

9. AOB

Q: was there a confirmed number of daily vehicle movements in and out of the plant? Noted that local people in Marston Moretaine had reported large numbers of lorries.

A: there were between 140 and 150 vehicles coming in and out of the plant every day, which was well within the limits of the DCO.

Q: had RSL got any responses to questions raised regarding the EFW Incinerator in North London?

A: Responses were provided on the slides no.12 &13. Other questions received regarding the wider site area are addressed in slide 14 as well as elsewhere in the meeting.

10, Date of Next Meeting

Provisionally Monday 25th April