

SWDWP
Communications report April 2010



South West Devon Waste Partnership
Roadshow and Community Engagement Report – January 2010

This report provides a summary of project related communication activities, written queries and responses made between February 2009 and April 2010.

1. Communication activities

8th & 9th February 2010 – MVV exhibition

MVV held a two day exhibition in Ernesettle and Weston Mill (North Yard site).

The partnership attended the exhibitions to provide members of the public with background information on the objectives of the partnership and the project.

12th March – MP briefing

MPs Linda Gilroy, Alison Seabeck and Gary Streeter attended an update on the project. Specific areas of interest were the proposals for New England Quarry and traffic access for the North Yard site.

12th March – briefing with IIW (Incineration Is Wrong)

IIW is an opposition group against the North Yard Proposal and was formed in February 2010. The partnership met with IIW for the first time on the 12th March to introduce the SWDWP and provide information on the project and the procurement.

15th March – Press release

The partnership released a statement following MVV's decision to focus on its North Yard solution. See appendix 1.

18th March – briefing with STIFLE (Stop The Incinerator Fouling Land at Ernesettle)

STIFLE is an opposition group against the Ernesettle Proposal. The partnership has met with STIFLE on a number of occasions. The partnership provided STIFLE with an update on the project and the current position for the Ernesettle site.

25th March – briefing with South Hams Council

A presentation on the project's aims and objectives and the work of the partnership was delivered to the Council. Specific areas of interest were: the scope of the partnership's consideration of all alternative options, the size of the facility and the effect of the New England Quarry proposals on the procurement, including suggestions of commercial waste

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treatment.

2. Summary of written queries received

Over the last three months, the partnership has received 37 written queries relating to the partnership's projects. A number of the letters received have been standard letters opposing the North Yard site. These have been sent to multiple council members and forwarded onto the partnership for response. Detailed below are the general topics and some general information we have provided in response to the written queries received:

2.1 Health

The partnership has invited specialist waste management contractors to propose solutions to meet our future needs and all the proposals being presented include energy from waste facilities. Energy from waste is a clean, proven and reliable process. Waste incinerators have been studied for many years and it has been proved that modern facilities have no measurable effect on human health and do not increase pollution significantly above that which already exists from normal human activities. These conclusions are supported by government agencies such as the Health Protection Agency and other independent qualified organisations. More information is available on our website www.swdwp.co.uk and also on www.hpa.org.uk

Energy from waste facilities are the most highly regulated industrial plants in the UK in terms of their emissions to the atmosphere. Companies are required by law to continually monitor emission levels. Once in operation, an energy from waste facility must conform to the Waste Incineration Directive, which was incorporated into English law through the Waste Incineration (England and Wales) Regulations 2002. This sets strict limits on the quantities of any pollutants a thermal waste treatment plant may produce. Also, a thorough Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be carried out for any site and facility as part of the planning application and permitting process which will be independently assessed.

2.2 Waste minimisation

The proposed energy from waste plant should be seen in the context of the waste hierarchy i.e. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recover Energy, Dispose and the partnership have already allowed for increased waste minimisation efforts alongside significantly improved recycling as part of their modelled future waste projections. These modelled projections have also been refreshed by the partner authorities in October 2009 to take account of the latest waste and population trends.

It has been stressed that local authorities have little control over waste production although the partner authorities through the Devon Authorities Waste Reduction and Recycling Committee has been promoting waste minimisation through a variety of channels including multi media advertising and meeting the public at road shows. Re-use is being promoted through re-sale of items from recycling centres and support for furniture re-use charities.

2.3 Impact on recycling

There will always be a proportion of our waste which cannot be recycled that will need other solutions such as waste contaminated by food or other organic matter (e.g. nappies).

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There are also waste elements that cannot be recycled as it is not sustainable or economic to do so e.g. composite materials, carpet, mattresses etc. A modern, appropriately sized and regulated facility provides an appropriate treatment arrangement to divert as much of this waste as possible from more harmful landfill.

The partnership has carefully sized the facility (i.e. limiting the capacity of the plant) for projected future needs such that there will be scope to increase recycling to latest national target levels set by the government and beyond. Our new facility will be part of an integrated waste management solution sized to meet the needs of South West Devon, so as not to 'crowd out' recycling. The partnership, along with the District Councils, are making strenuous efforts to further increase the level of materials recycled in the area and this has been allowed for in forecasting our future needs.

Energy from waste plants generally rely on a relatively poor quality waste stream. The plants do not work so efficiently if fed materials with high energy content, such as a lot of plastics. So rather than discourage recycling, it is important that items of high energy content are extracted and recycled leaving a 'lower calorie' waste stream for the plant to incinerate.

The system cannot be viewed in isolation – it relies on a fully integrated process where reduce, reuse, and recycling are the first elements of the waste treatment. This type of integrated scheme is fully in line with UK Government policy and EU legislation. It reflects the move away from landfill towards increased recycling and recovering some value from waste, such as generating energy.

2.4 Effects on the local community

Potential light and noise impacts will be assessed and any issues dealt with as part of the planning and Environmental Permitting process. Notwithstanding this, there is no reason why a facility of this type would require lighting beyond that needed for vehicle movements to and from the facility. Also noise levels from the process can be controlled and would not normally be audible outside the main building.

Facilities of this type generally create 200 jobs during construction and approximately 30 jobs for the general day-to-day running of the facility.

2.5 Stack height

The height of the chimney for a waste to energy plant will be calculated to ensure adequate dispersal of any flue gasses regardless of weather conditions and must be calculated for each specific site according to topography and weather conditions. Contractors will undertake extensive air quality investigations and dispersion modelling as part of their proposals, which will determine the exact chimney height. This exercise has yet to be completed by the bidders but it is usual for a facility of this capacity to have a chimney in the region of 90 metres tall. This structure would be designed to complement the facility architecture and minimise adverse visual impact as far as possible.

2.6 Sustainability

The impact of transportation to and from the proposed sites will be assessed as part of the procurement and also as part of the planning application process. Some consideration has already been given to transportation issues as part of the site identification and this will be

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further reviewed through the bid evaluation process used by the South West Devon Waste Partnership to select the preferred bidder.

In terms of location, the largest proportion of residual waste (by Council) going to the energy from waste facility will be generated in Plymouth and hence locating the facility in or near to Plymouth will reduce the miles that waste has to travel overall.

2.7 Traffic

As part of the planning process contractors will be required to produce detailed studies of the projected traffic flows and ensure they will have no unacceptable adverse impacts on existing transport network. If road improvements are deemed to be required these will be undertaken as part of the project works.

The waste which will be delivered to the new facility is currently being delivered to one of two landfill sites. Refuse collection vehicles currently collect waste from Plymouth and parts of South Hams and take it to Chelson Meadow from where it is loaded onto bulk tipping vehicles for onward transport via the A38 to a landfill in Cornwall. Similar bulk tippers carry waste from West Devon to the same landfill. Waste from Torbay, parts of South Hams and Teignbridge is currently taken to a landfill near to Newton Abbot. Depending on the final site location chosen it maybe possible to reduce the amount of waste miles travelled and potential increased use of bulk tipping vehicles to transport waste may make it possible to plan deliveries to avoid times of day when the traffic is particularly heavy.

2.8 PFI

The Government's Private Finance Initiative (PFI) programme has been used widely for building schools and hospitals around the UK. It is a way of funding major capital projects such as large scale building, construction or infrastructure projects with an appropriate risk transfer to the private sector without having to use money directly from the 'local public purse' – i.e. the council. If the partnership's project were unable to attract central government PFI support, alternative funding mechanisms would result in an associated rise in council tax for residents.

PFI contracts are long term; the partnership is looking for a contract over the next 30 years. This is because it is a major investment: the costs of building the facility and operating it are borne by the contractor, so there needs to be some long-term security and certainty. The contractor needs to know that they are guaranteed to get our waste for a definite amount of time – assuming they meet all the performance and agreed standards. PFI contracts are designed around an 'output specification', so that if the contractor does not meet our high-level specific requirements or there are performance issues, the partnership can withhold payment or even terminate the agreement. Flexibility can also be built into the contract to recognise and manage future changes.

2.9 Need for a solution

Regarding other waste management solutions, each partner council considered a range of alternative waste treatment options as part of their Municipal Waste Management Strategy development and options were again considered as part of the partnership's outline business case. These option appraisals' each concluded that a thermal process recovering energy from waste was a preferred option for treating our residual waste alongside

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increased recycling and waste minimisation.

Our potential energy from waste solution intends to only treat the residual waste which has not been removed by waste minimisation and recycling initiatives. The partnership has calculated its future residual waste tonnage need on the basis that the partnership authorities will continue to improve recycling rates until they are over 50%. In addition, our future needs have also considered future local population trends which are predicted to rise.

The overall strategy and justification for engaging in this procurement can be found in the Outline Business Case which is available within Documents section of our partnership website.

By way of background to the project, like most authorities, the partnership councils currently rely on landfill for the disposal of the majority of their waste that cannot be reused, recycled or composted. Landfills produce harmful methane gas which contributes to global warming and also toxic liquid leachate which can be extremely damaging to the environment. To reduce the reliance on landfill the Government has increased landfill tax so that everyone will be paying £72 per tonne tax by 2013, having risen from £7 per tonne when it was first introduced in 1996.

In addition, the Government has given all councils an annual decreasing allowance of biodegradable municipal waste that we can landfill every year, or risk fines at £150 for each tonne over our allowance. The cost of not finding an alternative solution will therefore result in significant council tax increases. Over the expected life of the contract, an energy from waste solution is estimated to be at least £150m lower than continuing with landfill (including government PFI support) with alternative waste treatment solutions estimated to be currently more expensive than landfill.

Our evaluation has also estimated that an energy from waste solution would save approximately 38,000 tonnes of carbon equivalent per year compared to landfill disposal. This is the equivalent of removing approximately 14,000 medium sized cars from the road per year within the partnership area. In addition, if the heat generated from the process can be used productively this could increase the figure by up to a further 40,000 tonnes saved, the equivalent of removing a further 15,000 medium sized cars.

3. Media Enquiries

Enquiries have been focused around three key areas:

The new opposition group, Incineration is Wrong – has attracted substantial media attention, with a community meeting and the launch of their official group.

The proposals for New England Quarry have also been subject to media interest, with Eco Ivy and Save Our South Hams expressing their opposition to the plans; the partnership was invited to give the context for the proposals.

The withdrawal of the Ernesettle site also featured in numerous media outlets. Whilst the partnership gave limited comment, we also assisted with MVV's response.

Appendix 1



On behalf of South West Devon Waste Partnership

15 March 2010

MVV concentrating on Devonport North Yard proposal for South West Devon Waste Partnership

The South West Devon Waste Partnership has been notified that MVV is now concentrating its efforts on a single bid proposal for an Energy from Waste facility on a site at North Yard, Devonport.

Mark Turner, Project Director for SWDWP said: "MVV have decided to focus on their bid solution at North Yard, Devonport. We have always been aware that MVV would only be likely to take one proposal through to the final tender stage, so this is not entirely unexpected."

The Ernesettle site still remains allocated within Plymouth City Council's planning framework and is classed as being suitable for strategic waste management facilities, this includes the site being used as a waste management facility in the future. More information is available under the planning section of Plymouth City Council's website www.plymouth.gov.uk.

The Partnership now has two companies proposing solutions at two sites: These are:

MVV Umwelt - North Yard HM Naval Base Devonport
Viridor - New England Quarry

For more information, please see www.swdwp.co.uk

ENDS

Editors' Notes

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An announcement on preferred bidder will be made in early 2011.

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Our evaluation has also estimated that an energy from waste solution would save approximately 38 000 tonnes of carbon equivalent per year compared to landfill disposal. In addition, if the heat generated from the process can be used productively this will increase the figure by a about another 40 000 tonnes saved.

For more information please contact Liz Waugh on 01752 847135 or Jane Slavin (PCC) on 01752 304049.