



**Outer East Area Committee
Halton Moor Waste Management meeting
18 February 2012**

Present:

Cllr M Lyons, Cllr K Mitchell, Andrew Lingham (LCC), Liz Eatock (LCC), John O'Sullivan (Veolia), Phil Gilmore (Veolia), L Thompson, (WYPolice), T Murphy (WYPolice) Residents: K West, A Conlon, P Conlon, Alan McHugh, Judith Cummins, E Babnall, Graham Snook, Mr Hargreaves, T Dennis, G Green, Gladys Townend, Kevin Townend, Rev Karen Marshall, Ron West, Kevin Kingswood, M Wilson, D Glassford, Y T Mai, Chau Ho, J Zhao.

Item	Welcome, introductions and apologies
1.1	<p>Cllr Lyons welcomed everyone and stressed this was an Outer East Committee meeting through the Halton Moor Forum.</p> <p>He thanked John O'Sullivan and Phil Gilmore from Veolia, LCC Waste Strategy and Policy Manager Andrew Lingham and LCC Executive Finance Manager Liz Eatock for attending to answer questions.</p>
2.0	John O'Sullivan
2.1	<p>PROJECT MANAGER</p> <p>John O'Sullivan said he was not planning to do an extensive background presentation as he had seen many people in the room at previous presentations. He said there were boards around the room and he and his colleague were happy to discuss items following the meeting. He said his talk was based upon the 24 questions submitted in advance and following this he would be pleased to answer any questions from the floor.</p> <p>John said the Waste Management facility had been designed and sized to meet Leeds' municipal waste needs and expected to recycle a minimum of 10% of the input waste and the remainder would be incinerated under controlled conditions to generate electricity. The plant will bring up to 46 long term jobs and up to 300 during peak building phases. He said improved processes meant the city ratepayers should be saved around £200m compared to the projected cost of landfill. Veolia has a track record of being a good neighbour.</p>
	Site Management questions
	<p>Answers provided by John O'Sullivan</p> <p>Q) What are the ground dimensions and the chimney height?</p> <p>A) The facility will be 100m long and 42m high and the south side will be covered by a living wall. The stack is expected to be around 75m high however the final height will be determined by the Environment Agency.</p> <p>Q) Will the plant be operating on a 24/7 cycle?</p> <p>A) It is expected to work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with a two week annual shutdown. Deliveries will mainly be between 6am-6pm.</p> <p>Q) When the site was previously in use for markets and car boot sales, joy riders accessed the site out of hours. Will they be able to do this again on parts of the site not occupied by Veolia?</p> <p>A) I understand the area has had problems in the past with security. We will have a 24/7 onsite presence and cctv. We will not be using the area to the north of our site but we will leave it secure and as a good neighbour we will keep an eye on it.</p>

Q)	Will all rubbish be kept on site - will any be stored outdoors?
A)	Waste vehicles will go into buildings to unload under negative pressure meaning that the air in the reception hall will be drawn into the combustion process, thus preventing the escape of odours.
Q)	Will hospital waste, body parts, toxic and radio-active waste be treated here?
A)	No. Only non-hazardous waste will be treated there.
Q)	Who suggested the scheme and who approved it - was it considered by the full Council who were kept fully aware of implications and developments or by limited members and officials?
A)	(By Andrew Lingham) This project has been very high profile for the last 3-4 years. It has been subject to a number of Executive Board approvals, has been debated in full Council on numerous occasions and, prior to appointing Veolia as Preferred Bidder, the Council has communicated regularly with local residents to provide them with updates on the proposals. As regards costs, LCC is to receive £69m in PFI credits to assist with a new waste treatment facility. Disposing of 200,000 tonnes of municipal waste to landfill each year is a major environmental problem and very expensive..
3.0	Risk and Environmental Impact Assessment
Q)	Is the risk assessment and environmental impact assessment of the site available to view?
A)	The Environmental Impact Assessment documents that will form part of the planning application will be very substantial items containing a great deal of research and considering all of the potential environmental and health impacts. There will be a lot of advance assessment before Planners decide if the scheme is appropriate. Veolia will also have to apply for an Environmental Permit from the Environment Agency, and the plant will not operate unless Veolia are awarded this permit. These assessments, applications and permits will all be publicly available documents.
Q)	Will the incinerator be designed to allow the energy generated to be re-used so reducing carbon emission?
A)	Energy generated will produce steam to turn the turbine to produce electricity to serve the plant, but with the majority going to the National Grid. Cables connecting to the National Grid will all be underground. The benefit of energy sales will be shared with the Council. Veolia are investigating a district heat network to serve businesses and/or new housing in the area (Veolia already operate one in Sheffield,). This will increase the energy efficiency of the plant and will contribute to LCC meeting its carbon reduction targets.
Q)	What is being offered to provide dust and noise barriers for nearby homes and what streets are offered protection?
A)	All tipping of waste will be within an enclosed reception hall. There will be negative pressure within the waste reception hall, with the air being drawn through the combustion process, in order to stop dust and smells coming out of the building. Noise restrictions will be detailed in the planning application and that will be measured to ensure Veolia are meeting it.
Q)	Will the air quality be monitored and will there be regular independent environmental inspections?
A)	European legislation sets very tight emissions limits. Waste incineration emissions are continuously monitored, are reported to the Environment Agency and will be published on Veolia's website. The Environment Agency will check this monitoring and will also carry out their own monitoring and inspection throughout the plant's operational life.

Q)	What limits, controls and monitoring will take place in terms of air quality and over what radius: could westerly winds carry particles/pollution over to Colton LS15 and beyond?
A)	Monitoring further afield is not undertaken, and the focus is on ensuring that levels emitted from the stack are below the required levels. However a huge amount of work is done in advance of submitting a planning application to survey prevailing winds, inclusive of hill gradients, etc in order to ensure that the plant design and stack height is appropriate. There is a huge amount of related work which will be presented as a summary at the drop-in presentations in March. The Environment Agency will check up frequently and if they decide there are problems meriting attention they can shut the facility down until they are resolved.
Questions from the floor to Veolia	
Q)	Have any facilities ever been closed by government? If signs go up but they are not policed that is no use at all.
A)	(Veolia) We have not had any facilities closed down.
Q)	We all know some company's flout regulations so you can have as many safeguards as you like – if the rules are not being stuck to there will still be emissions.
A)	(Andrew Lingham): These facilities are safe. The government has produced a wide range of studies which do not show any health effects arising from Waste Management facilities like the one proposed for Leeds. The Council would not be promoting a facility if we had any doubts over its safety and the company's suitability and track record.
Q)	With Halton and Halton Moor being the most vulnerable for heart and lung disease this is the worst spot in the city to build the facility. Why has the site been picked here rather than Skelton Grange?
A)	(Andrew Lingham): The Council did two wide-ranging surveys and looked at 2,000 sites which they reduced to 4: The Wholesale Market, Skelton Grange and two at Knostrop Waste Water Treatment Works.
Q)	There was no public consultation with us before the site was chosen. No-one came to ask questions.
A)	(Cllr Mick Lyons): It wasn't even public to Councillors of where it would be. What we are arguing is that there's never been discussion with us over where the site should be. (Andrew Lingham): The Council acknowledges that facilities of this kind are contentious, and so have used planning criteria to determine the best site. The planning system and criteria is in place to ensure that developments are appropriate to their locations. The Council has been very open about these sites in its communications with residents over several years, and the sites have been consulted upon publicly within emerging Planning Policy. Ultimately, though, residents will be consulted as part of the assessment of Veolia's planning application. (Andrew Lingham): From the comments made, the concerns being expressed by residents are largely around perceived health impact. However, with the technology in place, the track record of this kind of facility over decades, the legal limits on emissions, the Environment Agency regulation and the health evidence not showing a link with health impacts, the Council does not believe there will be concerns around health.
Q)	Air quality is fine when it goes right but what happens if it goes wrong as I understand is being investigated in Pennsylvania?
A)	(Phil Gilmore, Veolia): We've run the Sheffield plant for 10 years and will be pleased to give any of you the opportunity to look around the Sheffield facility. You will see that in practice

	<p>any issues arising are properly managed. We're happy to bring documents and evidence showing this to the next drop in session.</p> <p>Q) What was the criteria for siting the facility at Halton Moor?</p> <p>A) (Andrew Lingham): The site selection studies completed by the Council are published and are available to view. The main factors believed to make the site suitable are its location within the Cross Green Industrial Estate, the City's main industrial area, and its excellent access in terms of location on the East Leeds Link Road and links to the City's main highway network.</p> <p>(Cllr Mick Lyons:) We are asking you to please consider moving it to another location. Even at this late stage could it be moved to Skelton Grange? If by any chance you do get permission for the site here, is there any chance you could give something back to this community by reopening our leisure centre?</p> <p>(Cllr Mick Lyons): Section 106 money should be available for local community benefit.</p>
	<u>Finance</u>
	<p>Q) What is the estimated cost of the waste management plant?</p> <p>A) (Liz Eatock): For the 25 year contract we anticipate it will be around £465m which is £200m cheaper than the estimated cost of landfill. The Council already pays substantial sums for waste disposal and this is set to increase with escalating landfill costs.</p> <p>The standard position for PFI contracts is that the facility reverts to Council ownership at the end of 25 years, although the Council may consider alternative options. The Council is also set to receive £69m in PFI credits which will equate to around £135m in income to the Council over the life of the contract.</p> <p>Q) As Biffa are to build a business waste incinerator, which I understand has more than adequate capacity to dispose of domestic waste, why do we need another one?</p> <p>A) (Andrew Lingham) Biffa was one of the early bidders and was eliminated at an early stage based on a detailed assessment and scoring of their proposals. However, there are substantial quantities of commercial waste generated in Leeds, and data on waste generation shows that there is sufficient to require both the proposed facility for municipal waste and a facility for commercial waste. Biffa have only submitted a planning application at present, and whether they are in a position to fund and build a facility is not known to the Council.</p> <p>Q) What is the difference between Biffa's charges per load/ton and the routine costs envisaged by Veolia and exactly what tonnage or load frequency are we immediately concerned with?</p> <p>A) (Andrew Lingham) The only way to establish gate fees with any kind of certainty is to go through a proper competitive tendering process, of the kind that the Council has just gone through over the last three years. Biffa did bid for this contract but were one of the bidders to be eliminated based on a detailed assessment and scoring of their proposals.</p> <p>(Liz Eatock): To secure the £135m from government the Council needs to proceed along the current path.</p> <p>Q) (Cllr Mick Lyons): If it gets planning permission have we got the £135m for the PFI?</p> <p>A) (Liz Eatock): At the moment we have not got the money, as is typical at this stage of the process ahead of having signed a contract with Veolia, but at the point of the contract award we would get a promise from the government. It is unlikely the PFI money would be withdrawn at this stage.</p>

	Traffic
	<p>Peter Mudge read the written responses received from Highways.</p>
Q)	<p>Can the road accessing the site from the north be narrowed or blocked so lorries cannot come that way. (Residents were not content with the reassurance that drivers will be told not to come that way.)</p>
A)	<p>(Highways) The incinerator site is proposed to take its access from New Market Approach to the western side of the site. This is a cul-de-sac serving a number of other industrial units. New Market Lane forms the eastern boundary to the site and does link to residential areas to the north. It is unlikely that this route would be used by incinerator vehicles, and there is already a ban on vehicles over 7.5t using this route through onto Halton Moor. Any HGV driver flouting the HGV ban would be subject to a fine and points on their license – a significant deterrent to professional drivers. The very large majority of trips to and from the incinerator will be made on a regular basis by drivers who get to know best and most appropriate routes.</p> <p>The route via Halton Moor Avenue and Newmarket Lane is designated in the Aire Valley Area Action plan as a public transport link from the surrounding residential areas to the employment land, which is key to bringing forward the regeneration benefits, the document also suggests that a bus gateway would be provided on the route to deter ‘rat running’ traffic. Therefore, whilst physical narrowing would not be viable to deter lorries as it would also prevent the passage of buses, if a bus gateway were introduced, which could have enforcement cameras, this would have the desired effect. At the moment the transport strategy for the whole of the Aire Valley has to mature before the precise details of the arrangement can be certain.</p> <p>The route of the refuse collection lorries that will access the site is within the control of the council, at the moment most of the lorries are using the tip site on Pontefract Lane and as such their routes probably won’t change much to access the new site. There will clearly be other HGV traffic associated with the site, at the moment I do not have figures for the number trips, but as part of either this proposal or the wider Aire Valley strategy there will be a need to ensure that lorries do not cause environmental or safety problems in the surrounding residential areas. At the moment, any necessary measures still need to be identified.</p> <p>I don’t think we should support a full closure or physical narrowings as the route looks to be the most direct link for residents into their area and also an important route for emergency vehicles – I would expect objections from both to a full closure or physical width restrictions.</p>
Q)	<p>What is being done to block the noise of lorries from nearby residents?</p>
A)	<p>The nearest residential properties are approx 360m from the nearest corner of the incinerator site. The issue of noise will be considered as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and isn’t a highway matter. Beyond the site itself (and with the HGV ban on New Market Lane) the lorries will just become part of background traffic noise on the highway network.</p>
Q)	<p>If you do get permission could you build an earth mound to protect people nearby?</p>
A)	<p>Noise must be kept down if the facility is operating 24 hours a day. I already get more than enough noise from other nearby facilities.</p> <p>(Phil Gilmore): In Sheffield the facility is much nearer houses than the one planned here and in Hampshire it is next door to houses, yet at both we get very few complaints at all. Obviously, I hope the planning process goes ahead and then you will be able to see for yourselves that there is very little noise.</p>
Q)	<p>Which are permitted roads for the lorries and are there any time restrictions?</p>
A)	<p>See also Highways comments above.</p>

<p>Q)</p> <p>A)</p>	<p>(Highways) Vehicles from the incinerator will be 'permitted' to use any legally available route. This can be restricted through the use of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs), such as the HGV ban described above for New Market Lane, or potentially by voluntary agreement of the incinerator operators, although the latter is very hard to enforce.</p> <p>Time restrictions of the operation of the incinerator, or restrictions on delivery times can be imposed through planning conditions and will be considered as part of the application process. Such restrictions would be based on local amenity reasons rather than any highway related reason.</p> <p>Will waste from the Whitkirk, Austhorpe, Crossgates, Halton and Halton Moor be transported along Halton Moor Avenue? If so, what strategic planning is there for the three local schools who all exit at 1500 hours?</p> <p>See previous Highways comments above.</p> <p>(John O'Sullivan): From the comments being made, it is clear that this is an existing problem. Veolia may be able to assist with this, but will certainly not contribute to making it worse.</p>
	<p>Chair's Summary</p>
	<p>Cllr Lyons said: "From this meeting it's clear people in Temple Newsam Ward do not want this sited near our houses – could you please find some way to move Veolia to another site or only have one burning through the Biffa site? On Monday evening I will ask them politically to look again at the site."</p>