

Report of Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

Report to Scrutiny Board (Safer and Stronger Communities)

Date: 13th February 2012

Subject: Overview of Veolia Environmental Services pre-planning public consultation for the Recycling and Energy Recovery Facility

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Burmantofts and Richmond Hill Temple Newsam
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

- 1 On 2nd November 2011, the Executive Board appointed Veolia ES Aurora Limited (Veolia) as the preferred bidder to treat Leeds' residual household waste for the next 25 years. This decision was considered by Scrutiny Board on 22nd November 2011, who requested regular updates on the progress of the project especially in relation to the public consultation on the future planning application.
- 2 This report provides an overview of Veolia's consultation activities undertaken to date, and details the proposed activities for February and March prior to the submission of their planning application in late Spring 2012.

Recommendations

- 3 Members of Scrutiny Board are recommended to:
 - Note and comment on Veolia's approach to pre-planning public consultation, including the use of a range of methods to ensure the widest possible audience is reached, including hard to reach groups and individuals.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members of Scrutiny Board an overview of the consultation activities undertaken so far by Veolia, and the details of future planned consultation and engagement activities.
- 1.2 These consultation activities relate to Veolia's planning application for the Recycling and Energy Recovery Facility, which is due to be submitted in late Spring 2012.
- 1.3 The over-riding aim of the consultation is to ensure that both the local community and other stakeholders have the opportunity to be informed about and influence Veolia's proposals for the former wholesale markets site prior to the submission of their planning application. This will help Veolia to identify the community's issues, concerns and ideas, which may not have otherwise been considered and addressed within their planning application.
- 1.4 As part of their planning application, Veolia will need to demonstrate to the Planning Authority how the findings of the public consultation has influenced their proposals, and where this has not been feasible, provide robust reasons for not doing so.

2 Background information

- 2.1 On 2nd November 2011, the Executive Board appointed Veolia as the preferred bidder to treat Leeds' residual household waste for the next 25 years. This decision was considered by the Scrutiny Board on 22nd November 2011.
- 2.2 The Preferred Bidder decision was based upon Veolia's proposed technology, which is mechanical pre-treatment to extract recyclable materials, and the waste that is leftover is then burnt under controlled and safe conditions using proven Energy Recovery technology, to generate electricity and potentially heat should a suitable scheme come forward.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 The following provides an overall of the consultations activities being undertaken by Veolia to support their planning application.

Political Briefings

Councillor Briefings

- 3.2 Briefings have been offered by Veolia to all the members representing Burmantofts and Richmond Hill and Temple Newsam wards. Five out of the six members accepted the offer.
- 3.3 The local councillors have also received various mailings from Veolia to advise them of residents mailings and exhibitions.

MP Briefings

- 3.4 All Leeds MPs have been offered briefings by Veolia. Hilary Benn MP and Alec Shelbrooke MP have both received full briefings. Ed Balls MP declined a briefing. Veolia have not received a reply from any of the other MPs. Because of his past interest in the project, George Mudie MP has been followed up a second time and offered a briefing.

Community Meetings

- 3.5 Presentations on Veolia and their proposals for the former wholesale markets site have been made to:
- Richmond Hill Community Forum (5th December 2011)
 - Halton Moor and East Osmondthorpe Forum (17th January 2012)
 - Halton Forum (19th January 2012)

Website

- 3.6 A full and comprehensive website is published at www.veolia.co.uk/Leeds. This includes detailed information on the proposal, on Veolia and details of how local people can get involved through the Community Liaison Group and drop-in sessions. This website was launched in December 2011.
- 3.7 Veolia are regularly updating the website with latest news and other related items.

Direct Mailings

- 3.8 Around 11,500 leaflets and exhibition flyers, with a covering letter from Leeds City Council, were mailed to residents on 30th December via the Leeds City Council Print Unit. Veolia mailed out around 270 similar packs to community stakeholders (see Appendix 1), Cross Green Industrial Estate businesses and statutory consultees also on 30th December.
- 3.9 For this mail out, an 8 page A5 leaflet (see Appendix 2) was produced by Veolia which explained the background to the project, introduced the Recycling and Energy Recovery Facility, and the way local people could engage. A flyer inviting the recipient to Veolia's January drop-in sessions was also included.
- 3.10 Further mailings to provide updates on the project and publicise future consultation events are planned for February and March 2012.

Information Help lines

Telephone Helpline

- 3.11 Veolia's free telephone helpline, promoted via the residents mailings and website, has since the beginning of January received 20 calls. Of these 3 were from representatives of local community groups, and one was to register opposition to the development. Most calls have been to answer specific questions about the

project e.g. will any houses be demolished, or have been practical requests such as delivery of a new bin.

Email Enquiries

- 3.12 Veolia have received 30 emails to the enquiry email address. Many of these have been from companies wanting to do business with Veolia, but they have also received two emails asking about potential employment on the project. A number of emails have been to ask questions about the project and the drop-in sessions, to ask about joining the Community Liaison Group or to explain Veolia's position regarding Palestine (2 emails). A number of people registered on the Council's mailing list have asked to be added to Veolia's mailing list.

Drop-In Sessions

- 3.13 A series of public drop-in exhibitions were held on Thursday 19th, Friday 20th and Saturday 21st January 2012.
- 3.14 To ensure maximum access to local people, these sessions were:
- delivered in 3 separate locations within the community around the Cross Green Industrial Estate site i.e. Richmond Hill Community Centre, St Phillips Church, Halton Moor Community Centre, the aim being that any local resident wanting to learn more about the project could walk to a local session;
 - sessions were timed to run from 2:30pm to 8:30pm in the evenings (Thursday, Friday) and all day Saturday (10:00am to 4:00pm) to ensure those with day time jobs were able to attend.
- 3.15 Each session was staffed by 5 senior Veolia representatives and up to 2 Council representatives, with a series of detailed exhibition boards and other materials explaining the project and benefits to the Council and local people.
- 3.16 The sessions were advertised via residents mailing (11,500 residents), mailing and emailing local community groups, organisations and stakeholders, posters and flyers in libraries and one stop shops across the City (posters and A5 flyers sent to libraries (42) One Stop Shops (16) Community Centres (41) across the City) and half page advertisements for the preceding 2 weeks in the Yorkshire Evening Post and the Leeds Weekly News. Text reminders were also sent to those registered with the text news service, as well as on the Veolia Twitter feed. The Council held list of around 200 interested residents also received an email reminder of the sessions.
- 3.17 The sessions received around 85 visitors, with 70 registering their details. These included representatives of NO2 Incinerator, Friends of East End Park, Save our Homes, Wastedfood.co.uk, BTCV Skelton Grange, and the local Corpus Christi school. A number of feedback forms were completed during the exhibitions, as well as a number taken away with pre-paid envelopes for completion. Veolia are currently reviewing this feedback as it comes in.

- 3.18 The main issues raised by visitors included;
- the selection of the site and proximity to houses;
 - traffic (probably the most raised subject);
 - odour and noise; and
 - health impacts.
- 3.19 Although there were clearly people who attended the sessions who were against the development, there were also supporters, with the majority of attendees having genuine concerns and questions which the attending Veolia and Council officers addressed. Of the feedback forms received so far, the vast majority were satisfied on the key issues after attending the event.
- 3.20 Veolia intend to repeat these drop-in sessions, with the aim to present the planning application in detail, including the results of the site exploration surveys, environmental impact assessments and traffic assessments.
- 3.21 The exhibition materials at the second series of drop in sessions will include a model or computer generated fly-through of the facility. Photomontages showing different views of the facility, which will be based upon the results of the recent crane survey, will also be on show. Veolia are also aiming to produce impressions of the how the facility will look from nearby housing. All the images will show the stack height as agreed with the Environment Agency.
- 3.22 The changes that have been made to the proposals as a result of feedback from residents and the Community Liaison Group, will also be highlighted. Along with how the concerns expressed during the initial consultation events have responded to or taken account within Veolia's design.

Community Liaison Group

- 3.23 Veolia are in the process of forming a Community Liaison Group consisting of representatives of the local community, who can be involved in in-depth discussions about the project and will help Veolia understand local needs and opinions.
- 3.24 An independent chair has been selected by Veolia (Professor John Tarrant, former Vice Chancellor of the University of Huddersfield), but the members of the group will confirm this appointment during their initial meetings. Invitations to join the Group have been communicated via the residents mailing, press releases to local papers, and the drop-in exhibitions.
- 3.25 The first meeting is scheduled for Thursday 2nd February. So far, Veolia have received 6 completed application forms with a number issued at the exhibitions outstanding. In total of 6 forms were sent out as results of direct contacts through the helpline or emails, and an additional 12 were issued at the exhibitions with freepost return envelopes.

- 3.26 It should be noted that Veolia are in regular email contact with NO2 Incinerator and they have been invited to join the liaison group. Veolia have twice contacted Friends of the Earth via their website, but have received no responses.

Visits to Veolia's Sheffield Energy Recovery Facility

- 3.27 Veolia have provisionally planned visits to their Sheffield ERF for Tuesday 20th March 2012 for Councillors and for members of the Community Liaison Group, to see the site and hopefully talk to a member of the local community liaison group.

Promoting Local Jobs

- 3.28 Meetings have been arranged with Leeds University, Leeds City College and Leeds Building College to follow up letters of support supplied with Veolia's bid, and develop training, apprenticeships and other initiatives to support the employment of local people. A meeting with the Council's Employment and Skills Team is planned.

Environment Interest Groups

- 3.29 Veolia are due to present to the Leeds Environment Forum on Wednesday 8th February, and the Leeds Initiative Climate Change Partnership on Friday 2nd March.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 During a pre-planning application meeting on 5th August 2011, Veolia have discussed and agreed their pre-planning consultation and engagement approach with the Local Planning Authority. Veolia are in regular correspondence with the Local Planning Authority to discuss and clarify information relating to their future planning application.
- 4.1.2 Veolia gave a presentation to Plans Panel East on Thursday 26th January when their approach to pre-planning consultation was outlined and discussed.
- 4.1.3 Where possible, Veolia have also discussed their approach to community consultation with the local ward members, and have acted on their suggestions (for example, the drop in session venues).

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 Through using a wide range of consultation and engagement activities, Veolia are aiming to reach and engage with as many people as possible. They are also trying to engage with hard to reach groups and individuals where possible.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 Veolia's proposed approach to pre-planning public consultation has been developed in accordance with the Council's requirements for public consultation

on major planning applications as outlined in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (adopted February 2007).

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 The pre-planning consultations are the responsibility of Veolia as part of their planning application for the Recycling and Energy Recovery Facility. The Council currently considers that Veolia are providing adequate resources at their own expense, to ensure the community have the opportunity to get involved and comment on their proposals. Council officers are attending the public events to answer any questions or queries directly relevant to the Council.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 In response to a request by Scrutiny Board as part of their consideration of the Executive Board decision on the Preferred Bidder appointment, this report provides an overview on the pre-planning consultation activities being undertaken by Veolia.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 The Council has a risk management framework for the residual waste treatment project, which monitors and manages the key project risks. At present, the Council are monitoring Veolia's approach to minimising the risks associated with pre-planning public consultation and engagement, and this includes the risk of this consultation causing significant delays to the existing project programme.

5 Conclusions

5.1 The Executive Board decision to appoint Veolia as the preferred bidder for the residual waste project was considered by the Scrutiny Board on 22nd November 2011, who requested regular updates on the progress of the project especially in relation to the public consultation on the planning application.

5.2 This report provides the first update on the pre-planning consultation activities undertaken by Veolia so far, and details the planned activities for February and March prior to submitting their planning application in late Spring 2012.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Members of Scrutiny Board are recommended to:

- Note and comment on Veolia's approach to pre-planning public consultation, including the use of a range of methods to ensure the widest possible audience is reached, including hard to reach groups and individuals.

7 Background documents

7.1 Leeds City Council – Statement of Community Involvement (adopted February 2007)

7.2 Veolia Environmental Services – Introductory leaflet

APPENDIX 1. Local and Community Organisations included in the initial Veolia mailing:

- Access Committee for Leeds
- Aire Valley Leeds
- All Saints' Church (C of E) - Richmond Hill
- British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV)
- Brownhill Primary School
- Burmantofts Senior Action
- c.d.o.k. Tenants & Residents Association
- Community Unity
- Corpus Christi - Osmondthorpe
- Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School
- Corpus Christi RC High School
- Cross Gates Primary School
- East Leeds Cricket and Social Club
- East Leeds Health for All
- Garforth Community Association
- Groundwork Leeds
- Halton Moor and Osmondthorpe Project for Elders
- Halton Moor One Stop Shop
- Leeds City Council. Equality Team
- Leeds Connecting Communities
- Leeds Grand Mosque
- Leeds Jewish Welfare Board
- Leeds Tenants Federation
- Leeds, York and North Yorkshire Chamber
- Meadowfield Community Learning Centre
- Meanwood Valley Urban Farm
- Mount St Marys Catholic High School
- Newbourne Methodist Church - Richmond Hill
- Osmondthorpe Children's Centre
- Osmondthorpe Resource Centre
- Osmondthorpe Tenants & Residents Association
- Pontefract Lane Residents
- Richmond Hill Community Centre
- Richmond Hill Elderly Action
- Richmond Hill Primary School
- Save our Homes and Environment
- Shakespeare Primary School
- St. Philips's Church (C of E) - Osmondthorpe
- St. Vincents Support Centre
- Temple Moor High School Science College
- The Friends of East End Park
- United Sikh Association
- Victoria Primary School
- Whitkirk Primary School