

Cabinet support Energy from Waste proposals at Calvert

Buckinghamshire County Council's Cabinet today (28 February) decided that Energy from Waste was the best option to manage the county's waste, and reconfirmed its decision to award preferred bidder status to Waste Recycling Group (WRG).

This follows the Cabinet's review of the Overview and Scrutiny Commissioning Committee's recommendations to reconsider the decision, made in November 2010, to award preferred bidder status to WRG. The Committee also asked for clarification and reassurance on financial, legal, technology, consultation and planning aspects of the decision.

WRG proposes an Energy from Waste facility at Greatmoor, near Calvert, north Buckinghamshire.

Martin Tett, Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment said: "I would like to thank the scrutiny committee for taking such a thorough look at this project and giving us the opportunity to reinforce the robust process we have followed. We have been governed by strict EU procurement rules, which enable us to follow due process and reduce the risk of challenge.

"A significant amount of work has been carried out over the course of this procurement process to assess the most suitable solution to manage Buckinghamshire's waste. We have followed a rigorous evaluation process which has shown that WRG offer us the cheapest solution, helping us to save over £100 million in landfill costs over the life of the contract. Furthermore their proposals would also create over 300 jobs and a new access road which would divert traffic from local villages.

"Energy from Waste technology still remains one of the most proven, deliverable and affordable technologies on the market today. Other options, such as sending the county's household waste to nearby plants for processing have been considered. However this would involve short term contracts which would be more expensive when compared to the WRG offer and would provide great uncertainty around market capacity as the Council would also be competing with other suppliers. This would include commercial and industrial companies who would be able to procure a lot quicker than the Council.

"Our waste is currently dumped in holes in the ground where it rots and produces methane, a damaging 'greenhouse gas'. Because of this environmental damage, landfilling waste is increasingly subject to heavy fines and taxes which are almost certain to get even higher in the years ahead. We have to find a solution now in order to save for the future and I believe this is the best way forward."

The project team will now work with WRG to clarify and confirm commitments, and undertake final due diligence. The final decision to award the contract will be considered by the County Council's Cabinet in the autumn of this year.