

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE – 27 NOVEMBER 2017

APPLICATION CM/17/16

Good morning, my name is Chris Herbert and I am a Technical Director with SLR Consulting who prepared the planning application and ES on behalf of Veolia.

I would like to draw members attention to the following aspects of the committee report

Firstly on consultations, the following responses: Highways - no objection; Environment Agency - no objection; Natural England - no objection; Landscape - no objection; Environmental Health - no objection; District Council - no objection.

Page 23 of the report lists only 1 objection from the public in respect of this application.

What the above tells you is that this a good site for waste management development – it does not impact on the environment or local communities.

Secondly at page 26 of the report (para 96) your officers tell you there is a need for this type of development.

The only issue is therefore one of Green Belt policy and the need to demonstrate very special circumstances (VSC). To demonstrate VSC you have to show two things:

- One that there is a need for your development and as shown above your officers accept there is a need; and
- Two, that there are no suitable sites available outside of the Green Belt.

And it is on this second point that we believe your officers report is flawed.

This facility is proposed to serve the south of the county – this is where most people in Buckinghamshire live and where most of the waste is generated.

- North (Aylesbury) – 60% of area but only one third of the population
South (Wycombe, Chiltern and South Bucks) – 40% of the area but two thirds of the population
- Municipal waste generation: North 62,000 tonnes; south 111,000 tonnes
- New housing proposed (because your officers refer to this): North 27,400; South 24,900

The suggestion at page 30 para 113 that the applicant has identified suitable sites in the north of the county and that we could co-locate with existing anaerobic digestion (AD) and recycling developments in the north of the county ignores where these facilities are needed.

It is the south of the county where most people live and where most waste is generated and, to accord with the proximity principle, it is the south of the county which needs new waste management facilities. As pointed out above the north of the county already has recycling and AD facilities – the south of the county has none and this is where the need is. We have demonstrated clearly that there are no suitable sites outside of the Green Belt in the south of the county which is something I am sure councillors are aware of given that their own HWRC site for Gerrards Cross is located in the Green Belt – on land acquired from Veolia at this very site.

The reference to London waste is disappointing and not an issue that has been raised with us in the discussions we have had to date with your officers. If it had been raised the matter could have been dealt with by way of a catchment restriction agreement – it is not a reason for refusal.

To summarise this is a site which will not adversely impact on local residents or the environment and for which there is an identified need. This site has met the mineral and waste management needs of south Buckinghamshire since the 1940s and the application seeks to provide a facility which will continue to do this whilst delivering the movement of waste away from landfill as required by national and local policy. If it is refused the site and existing recycling facilities will close and in the region of 50 people will lose their jobs.

I would therefore ask members to support this application or at the very least defer a decision on this application and to ask their officers why they are not seeking to make provision for new waste management facilities in the south of the county. We believe they are avoiding taking difficult decisions about development in the Green Belt, but those members who know South Buckinghamshire must know that difficult decisions about development in the Green Belt have to be taken in order to deliver not just the waste management infrastructure but also the homes and jobs that are needed for local people.