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Minutes of a meeting of the Planning and Environmental Protection Committee held at the Town Hall, Peterborough on 13 October 2009

Members Present:

Chairman - Councillor North

Councillors - C Burton, Kreling, Lowndes, Thacker, Todd, Winslade, Lane, C Day and Sharp

Officers Present:

Nick Harding, Planning Delivery Manager
Susan Marsh, Principal Planning Officer – Minerals and Waste
Carrie Denness, Principal Solicitor
Gemma George, Governance Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ash.

Councillor Sharp attended as a substitute. Councillor C Day also attended as a substitute.

2. Declarations of Interest

Agenda item 4 Councillor Lane stated that he had received emailed information from local objector groups and residents, however this had not prejudiced him to take part in the item.

Committee Members confirmed that they had also received email communications from the objector groups and residents.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2009 were approved as a true and accurate record.

The meeting was adjourned for ten minutes to allow the Committee time to read through all of the additional information that had been provided.

4. Consultation from Adjacent Authority - Landfill Disposal of Low Level Radioactive Waste, East Northants Resource Management Facility, Stamford Road, Kings Cliffe

A planning application had been submitted to Northamptonshire County Council for the disposal of low level radioactive waste in part of the permitted hazardous waste

landfill site at the East Northants Resource Management Facility (ENRMF) situated in Kings Cliffe. Peterborough City Council had been consulted as an adjoining authority. This application was to permit the disposal of waste that contained low levels of radiation which typically arose from the decommissioning of nuclear power stations, science and research facilities, hospitals etc.

The wastes involved were mainly comprised of soils and building rubble, but as they contained small amounts of radioactivity they were not permitted to be disposed in the same way as uncontaminated building waste.

The type of waste involved (low level) was classed as having a radio active content not exceeding 4000 bacquerels per gram (Bq/g) of alpha or 12,000 Bq/g of beta or gamma activity. However, the material to be imported would not exceed 200 Bq/g. The amount of material to be imported would range between 13,200 cubic m and 14,600 cubic m per year up to 2013. 2013 was the date by which the wider facility would be full.

Nationally there was a need for disposal capacity for this sort of waste. The main permitted facility was at Drigg in Cumbria, but even with a recently permitted extension, the capacity of this site was limited and so new sites were being sought throughout the country that could be used for the disposal of low level waste.

The waste that was proposed would be disposed of by landfill and would fall within the lowest 5% of radioactive waste. The waste would be delivered to the site and taken directly to the area where it was to be landfilled. The waste would be kept within the containers that it was delivered to the site in.

The proposals would not increase the extent of the area of land to be landfilled, the volume of landfill (nearly 250,000 tonnes per annum) or the traffic movements associated with it. There would also be no change to the operational life of the site (due to cease in 2013), or to the restoration or aftercare requirements.

Regular monitoring would take place to ensure that management measures in place were fully effective and that the waste presented no danger to site workers, the wider public or to the environment.

Members' attention was drawn to additional information contained within the update report. The Committee was advised that numerous objections had been received highlighting a catalogue of issues surrounding the proposed disposal. These objections had been received from local residents via their Ward Councillor, as well as the Thornhaugh 1 Quarry Liaison Group, the ProForma Group, Duddington Parish Council, Peterborough Friends of the Earth and Wastewatchers who had submitted a document entitled "consultee response to the Environment Agency concerning the request for authorisation by Augean PLC to deposit low level radioactive waste in the Kings Cliffe landfill site".

Members were advised that the 10 parish councils in the East Northamptonshire and Peterborough area were intending to make a composite response to Northamptonshire County Council after a meeting with the operator on 15 October 2009.

Members discussed the report, and issues and observations were highlighted, including:

- The content of the report and the lack of time that had been available for the Committee to properly digest all of the objections and additional information which had been received
- The lack of public consultation
- The security situation on the site both before and after the proposed disposal
- The concerns regarding public safety
- The long term environmental effects of the site, what would happen to the site after 2013?
- The effect of landfilling such waste and the effect on the surrounding area
- The exact nature of the waste to be landfilled
- The lack of consultation response from the PCT
- The possibility of disposing of the waste by alternative means
- The reasons for this method of disposal, was it the cheapest?
- The robustness of the containers housing the waste
- The long term effects of potential leakage and contamination of local water courses, these being the River Welland, the River Nene and Rutland Water
- The location of the site, namely that it was on top of a large hill. Was this likely to cause problems going forward? i.e. seepage into the surrounding area
- The wider impact of the proposal and concerns that a precedent was being set for the future
- The fact that the proposal was premature in nature as Government policy on the disposal of LLW had still not been decided

After brief discussion a motion was put forward and seconded to agree to the objection of the proposal. The motion was carried unanimously.

The Committee was informed that its comments on the proposal would be submitted to Northamptonshire County Council as part of the consultation process.

RESOLVED: (unanimously) to object to the application and to provide Northamptonshire County Council with a response to their consultation request. This response would include the main points highlighted by the Committee during its debate.

Reasons for the decision:

As a neighbouring authority, Peterborough City Council was requested to respond to the consultation request by Northamptonshire County Council. Members considered the proposal unacceptable due to the issues mentioned during debate.

Chairman
13.30 – 14.25

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