Centre for Radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards

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5tth December 2011

Your Ref: P/11/03705/FU/MIN
Our Ref: P/11/03705/FU/MIN/LIC

Dear Mr Saul,

Re: Skelton Grange Road Site, Skelton Road, Stourton, Leeds

Thank you for consulting the Health Protection Agency (HPA) on 18 November 2011 on the above planning application for the development of an Energy from Waste facility.

It is understood that the applicant proposes to develop a facility for the combustion of up to 300,000 tonnes of residual commercial and industrial, non-hazardous waste, per annum; with the production of more than 30MW of electricity annually.

Regulatory Background

Operators of modern waste incinerators are required to monitor emissions to ensure that they comply, as a minimum, with the emission limits stated in the EU Waste Incineration Directive (2000/76/EC) (WID). This Directive has been implemented in England and Wales by the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 ('EP' Regulations), which is regulated by the Environment Agency (EA) and includes Emission Limit Values (ELVs) for a range of pollutants and requires monitoring to ensure compliance during operation.

Under the EP Regulations, the operator is required to apply for an Environmental Permit. The Permit will set out strict operating requirements which must be complied with to protect the environment and public health. The permit application will have to demonstrate that the proposed plant will use Best Available Techniques (BAT) in order to control emissions to air, land and water. The sector guidance note for combustion activities identifies the detailed requirements to be met and the EA is under no obligation to issue a Permit, unless it is fully satisfied that the installation will be operated appropriately.

The EA consults organisations such as the local Primary Care Trust (PCT); the HPA; the Local Authority (LA) and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) on EP applications. The HPA assesses the potential public health impact of an installation and makes recommendations based on a critical review of the information provided for the EP application. The HPA will request further information at the environmental permitting stage if we believe that this is necessary to be able to fully assess the likely public health impacts.

HPA position
The HPA has reviewed research to examine links between emissions from municipal waste incinerators and effects on health. The HPA concluded that:

"While it is not possible to rule out adverse health effects from modern, well regulated municipal waste incinerators with complete certainty, any potential damage to the health of those living close-by is likely to be very small, if detectable. This view is based on detailed assessments of the effects of air pollutants on health and on the fact that modern and well managed municipal waste incinerators make only a very small contribution to local concentrations of air pollutants.
The Committee on Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment has reviewed recent data and has concluded that there is no need to change its previous advice, namely that any potential risk of cancer due to residency near to municipal waste incinerators is exceedingly low and probably not measurable by the most modern techniques. Since any possible health effects are likely to be very small, if detectable, studies of public health around modern, well managed municipal waste incinerators are not recommended.
The Agency's role is to provide expert advice on public health matters to Government, stakeholders and the public. The regulation of municipal waste incinerators is the responsibility of the Environment Agency."

The full text is available from:
http://www.hpa.org.uk/Publications/Radiation/DocumentsOfTheHPA/RCE13TheImpactonHealthofEmissionstoAirfromRCE13/

Observations
As discussed, we will provide detailed comments on the specifics of the proposed facility to the EA, as part of the requirements of the EP Regime. However, we have made some observations below, which you may find of use:

The applicant has commissioned SLR Consulting Ltd (SLR) to undertake the required Environmental Impact Assessment. SLR concludes that the Environmental Statement has not identified any significant impact from the proposed development. SLR concludes that any impacts identified can be maintained within acceptable limits through the adoption of mitigation measures.

Site location
The proposed development site is located on part of the former Skelton Grange Power Station site in a predominantly industrial / commercial area. The closest residential areas lie approximately 1.5km to the north (Halton Moor) and west of the site (Hunslet); with

further residential areas approximately 2km to the south (Rothwell) and north west (Cross Green). There is an area of public open space to the south of the Aire and Calder Navigation, approximately 200m to the south west of the site.

Air Quality
The submitted document 'Air Quality 6' includes an assessment of potential emissions to air, including air dispersion modelling. The applicant states that the assessment is based upon a comparison of the baseline situation against the air quality impacts resulting from the development proposal scenario; and includes consideration of cumulative effects from other planned or proposed industrial sources in the area.

The applicant states that the dispersion modelling indicates a maximum ground level process contribution to the north east of the proposed facility. The applicant states that the combined impact of the proposed facility with the proposed Cross Green Heat and Power facility, at this location, does not result in exceedances of Air Quality Standards objectives, when combined with the applied backgrounds of 34.1µg/m^3 (as an annual mean) and 68.2 µg/m^3 (as a 1-hour mean 99.8%ile).

The applicant states that a stack height of 90m is proposed to allow a safety factor and to increase the protection afforded to ground level receptors from atmospheric emissions from the proposed facility.

The applicant summarises that the findings of the assessment of combustion emissions from the proposed facility has found that, for all pollutants, the maximum predicted long-term and short term impacts would be negligible.

It is recommended that Leeds City Council Environmental Health Department be consulted for matters relating to nuisance; contaminated land and background air quality.

Yours sincerely

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