

CABINET – 25 JUNE 2013

ITEM 4(b) - PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Public Questions

Question (1) from Mr David Beaman, Independent Member for Upper Hale, Farnham Town Council

Given the known problems of air quality in Central Farnham will Surrey County Council be making any bid for funding from the recently announced Clean Bus Technology Fund to fit equipment to older diesel engine buses?

Reply:

As a general rule, the county council will try to bid for external funds, provided that the cost of bidding is justified by the likelihood of winning funds. The Department for Transport recently issued guidance to local authorities on the Clean Bus Technology Fund (CBTF) pilot programme. The Government has made £5 million available to support local authorities with the costs of upgrading buses with appropriate technologies to reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) from older buses operated in congested urban areas. This is an initial bidding phase which will inform the DfT on whether a national programme could be developed. To be successful, a bid to the CBT Fund would need to be agreed between the county council and one or more bus operators. Officers are currently in discussion with a number of bus operators, together with colleagues in the boroughs and districts, to assess whether there is scope for a successful bid. This initial scoping work includes assessing opportunities for Farnham. The deadline for bids is 19 July.

**John Furey
Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and Environment
25 June 2013**

Question (2) from Mr Malcolm Robertson, Charlton Lane Community Liaison Group Member

I wish to ask a question about the County Council's Waste Strategy, and your waste contractor's proposals for a gasifier/incinerator at Charlton Lane, Shepperton.

Taking into account the fact that the gasifier/incinerator will be a prototype situated in a densely populated area, do you consider that you have been provided with sufficient information to both authorise further expenditure on this project, and guarantee the safety of the surrounding community?

Reply:

The previous supplier of gasification technology, Ascot Environmental went into administration for reasons that are unknown to Surrey County Council and SITA UK, but we remain confident that with SITA UK's and SUEZ ENVIRONNEMENT's financial and technical support, this technology would have worked at Charlton Lane. However, as this batch oxidation system gasification technology is no longer available SITA has chosen an alternative in order to move forward with the Eco Park.

Outotec and its technology have been rigorously scrutinised by technical and commercial experts in SITA UK and its parent company, SUEZ ENVIRONNEMENT. This included visiting operational plants, detailed technical discussions and financial evaluations. The technology has also been assessed by Surrey County Council's own technical advisors.

Surrey County Council and SITA UK are satisfied that Outotec is the most suitable company to provide the gasification process at Charlton Lane.

The fluidised bed technology proposed by Outotec is proven, although its use to date has largely been in combustion rather than gasification plant, as proposed for Charlton Lane. Outotec has supplied over 100 plants that use a variety of fuels, however only a small number of these operate in gasification configuration with the majority being combustion plants. Whilst there are a number of Outotec combustion plants that process refuse derived fuel, there are currently no gasification plants built to use this fuel. The three Outotec gasification facilities similar to that proposed for Charlton Lane, are in operation in the USA and Canada although operating on different types of fuel.

Both SITA and the council's technical advisors consider that Outotec has a good level of understanding of the complexity of waste gasification and the requirements of the UK regulatory system, and has the ability to design a plant to operate using residual waste from Surrey households for fuel.

The chemistry of the gasification of refuse derived fuel and combustion of the subsequent synthesis gas (syngas) is well understood. The gas clean up systems, that are proposed for the Eco Park are robust and proven on many thermal treatment plants throughout the UK and overseas.

Waste gasification is a relatively new technology in the UK and therefore the number of plants that are operational is limited, however a number of gasification plants using a range of technologies have planning consent and a plant using both pyrolysis and gasification technology has recently opened and is in operation at Avonmouth.

Both the anaerobic digestion plant and the gasification plant will have to meet stringent emission standards set by the Environmental Permit, required by the Environment Agency. The emissions standards are designed to ensure that there is no risk to human health or the environment from the operation of the plant and will take into account the location of the plant in terms of its proximity to homes.

The council's technical adviser has confirmed that they are confident that the plant will meet the requirements of the Waste Incineration Directive, which sets the relevant emissions standard.

Levels of emissions will be minimised primarily by well managed combustion, achieved by the plant design and by maintaining optimal combustion conditions; with further removal of pollutants by a gas-cleaning system. All thermal waste-treatment plants have to be operated in accordance with an Environmental Permit and this will only be granted by the Environment Agency if the operator can show that they are using the Best Available Techniques (BAT) to control emissions. The permit would require the cleaned exhaust gases to be monitored continuously for a wide range of compounds (typically CO, NO_x, PM, HCl, SO₂, total VOCs), and this provides a continuous indication of the combustion conditions (and potential for dioxins formation), which are to be maintained below stringent emissions limits. Further monitoring is carried out periodically (usually several times per year) for pollutants including those such as dioxins that are present at too small a concentration to be able to be monitored continuously. The cleaned process exhaust is then released to air from

a chimney stack of a height designed to ensure appropriate dispersion. The results of the continuous emissions monitoring have to be submitted to the Environment Agency; and, additionally, the Environment Agency sends in its own monitoring teams to make periodic unannounced spot checks on emissions.

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) is the government body responsible for protection of public health.

The HPA's position is that well run and regulated modern municipal waste incinerators are not a significant risk to public health. 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.

In conclusion I am satisfied that I have received the necessary assurances from both SITA and our own technical advisors that the that the proposed plant will not pose a risk to the health or safety of site staff, users of the site or residents who live in the surrounding area.

John Furey
Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and Environment
25 June 2013

Question (3) from Mr Andrew Telford, Chairman CPRE Surrey Runnymede District

Whereas:

1. Surrey County Council (SCC) unanimously resolved on 19/3/13 "To use its power to protect Surrey's Green Belt".
2. CPRE Surrey wholly endorses this resolution.
3. Runnymede Borough Council's draft Local Plan is inconsistent with the resolved position of SCC as it does not protect Surrey's Green Belt, removing, as it does, several hundred acres from the Green Belt at the DERA site to facilitate development.
4. There is strong popular support for SCC's landmark resolution as demonstrated by CPRE Surrey's e-petition regarding this matter, administered by MySociety through the RBC website, which has comfortably passed the threshold number of signatures required to ensure a debate in Full Council at RBC regarding removing any of the DERA site from the Green Belt.

What action does SCC propose taking in prosecuting its resolved policy of using its power to protect this part of Surrey's Green Belt, and will this include making a timely representation to Runnymede Borough Council raising a 'strong objection' to removing the land at the DERA site from the Green Belt?

Reply:

At its meeting on 19 March 2013, the County Council unanimously resolved to use its power to protect Surrey's Green Belt, support the National Planning Policy Framework (section 9 – paragraphs 79 to 92) and the Government's policy of protecting the Green Belt, to make Surrey's MPs and the County's Districts and Boroughs aware of this resolution and for any

Green Belt development in the County to be in line with the needs and wishes of Surrey residents.

Under the National Planning Policy Framework, it is for the Districts and Boroughs to set Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans with local consultation and independent examination of any proposed changes.

Runnymede Borough Council is currently preparing its new Local Plan and recently consulted on a draft Pre-Submission version of its Core Strategy. Balancing the need for housing and employment growth and the need to protect the Green Belt is a matter to be decided at the local level through the Runnymede Local Plan.

John Furey
Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and Environment
25 June 2013

Question (4) from Mr Nigel Eastment, Chobham Society Fairoaks Representative

The Fairoaks Operation Ltd 'Consultation and Notice of Development' is not a planning application, but a required step under the General Permitted Development Order. Our question is about protecting the Green Belt not a planning application.

1. Surrey County Council unanimously resolved on 19/3/13 "To use its power to protect Surrey's Green Belt", and their stated position in limb 4 of the resolution is that any Green Belt development in the County should be "in line with the needs and wishes of Surrey residents".
2. Fairoaks Operations Ltd has a proposal for a hangar at Fairoaks Airport, which encroaches on the Green Belt.

What action does Surrey County Council propose taking in applying its resolved policy of using its power to protect this part of Surrey's Green Belt and ensuring that any Green Belt development in the County is in line with the needs and wishes of Surrey residents, and will this include making a timely representation to Surrey Heath Borough Council raising an objection to this proposal?

Reply:

At its meeting on 19 March 2013, the County Council unanimously resolved to use its power to protect Surrey's Green Belt, support the National Planning Policy Framework (section 9 – paragraphs 79 to 92) and the Government's policy of protecting the Green Belt, to make Surrey's MPs and the County's Districts and Boroughs aware of this resolution and for any Green Belt development in the County to be in line with the needs and wishes of Surrey residents.

The current proposals on Fairoaks Airport, a major developed site in the Green Belt, fall to be considered under Part 18 A.2 of the General Permitted Development Order. This allows a relevant airport operator to carry out development in connection with the provision of services and facilities on operational land, subject to the operator consulting the local planning authority before carrying out any development. The airport operator, Fairoaks Operation Ltd, has consulted Surrey Heath Borough Council in order to confirm that the proposal is permitted development. There is no requirement for the Borough Council to consult third parties, although a meeting with Chobham Parish Council has been arranged.

John Furey
Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and Environment
25 June 2013

Question (5) from Ms Jenny Desoutter

Cycle Race Road Closures

My question refers to the closures of 4 August 2013.

The right of way over public roads and highways, together with freedom of movement, is one of the most inalienable and fundamental civil human rights. Indeed it is essential to daily living, and the network of public roads in rural Surrey is used seven days a week, 365 days in a year, in order that residents can fulfil the obligations and meet the needs of daily life.

Many of these uses are essential, for example:

- Getting to and from work
- Keeping in touch with friends and family
- Visiting those in hospital
- Delivering care and support to less able or dependant family members and others
- Being able to access emergency treatment centres without involving emergency services
- Being able to access shops including pharmacies in case of unexpected incidents
- In August, school holidays, many families may need to travel to begin, or to return home from holidays
- Attending to welfare of livestock in pastures and premises not adjacent to domicile
- Emergency services to wild life such as Wildlife Aid
- Accessing veterinary care in case of need
- Pursuing voluntary activities as part of community life
- Accessing recreational, sporting and leisure facilities for training and fitness

Apart from the fact that these journeys are an integral and essential part of life, many people have commitments which limit flexibility, and many are already under pressure from busy

schedules. Freedom of choice enables people to manage their own lives and priorities effectively, and enables society to function through complex interactions which are not simple to adjust.

Surrey County Council is the elected body responsible for the highways, and it has chosen to close a large number of roads to the public for a whole day on 4 August, in order that the roads may be used exclusively as a race track by a select group of fit, able-bodied people enjoying a leisure activity of their choice. Because of this decision, a large proportion of Surrey residents will be unable to pursue their normal, chosen, or essential activities. Many, including myself, have so far not even been officially informed of this fact, in order that advance planning may be considered. At the date of submitting this question (18th June) the race organisers, Ride London, and SCC Highways are still unable to state exactly which roads surrounding the route they will decide to close.

I would ask the following:

- (1) Can the Council state how many residents will have their lives disrupted and their freedom of movement curtailed by the closure of highways for this non-essential leisure event, and by what process of consultation they have carried out an assessment of the impact of this event on residents' lives?
- (2) By what powers do Surrey County Council rescind the historic right of all people other than racing cyclists to use the highways for legitimate purposes on this day, and can SCC explain the principles which guided their decision to give priority on this day to the wish of a powerful special-interest group to use our communal roads as a private race track for pleasure, rather than safeguarding and protecting the individual freedom and civil liberties which are the pride of citizens of this country, and which enable millions of people to meet their own essential daily needs, and to live their lives independently and with dignity?

Reply:

- (1) This type of road closure is not unprecedented in Surrey, and the learning from the extremely successful Olympic cycling events is being applied to ensure that the public are aware and disruption is kept to an absolute minimum. The event organiser has completed an assessment of the community impacts which will form the basis of the ongoing consultation process. Tens of thousands of households and businesses on the route and within 100m of the route, are being provided with essential information to help them plan ahead. This includes the sharing of impacts through newsletters to homes on the route, drop-in sessions for residents and appointments with those on the route with specific concerns.
- (2) The Event is a joint venture between the Surrey County Council and the Mayor of London, and was approved by the Surrey County Council Cabinet in December 2011.

For the purpose of holding this sporting event on the highway, Surrey County Council as the Highway Authority, will allow road closures under a Special Events Order, as per section 16A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, this allows for the sporting events to take place on the public highway.

We fully understand that there is an impact on residents and communities, which is why many have already received assistance. Anyone with specific travel needs is being encouraged to refer to **www.gosurrey.info** or to contact the event organiser

on **0845 894 9773** or residents will be able to discuss and plan access on the 4th August 2013 at one of the following drop-in sessions,

- Dorking Halls, Dorking – 4 July, 15:00-19:00
- Heart Shopping Centre, Walton-on-Thames – 5 July, 11:00-15:00
- Box Hill Village Hall, Box Hill – 8 July, 16:00-20:00
- Forest Green Village Hall, Leith Hill – 9 July, 16:00-20:00
- Park House, Leatherhead – 10 July, 16:00-20:00

Surrey County Council feels strongly that a charity fun ride and an elite cycling race, that will attract thousands of spectators and millions of worldwide television viewers, is an important Olympic legacy, providing many benefits in the following ways:

- Fostering greater links and economic benefits through closer relations with London Partners,
- Promoting and inspiring healthy lifestyles and activities
- Promoting Surrey as a welcoming destination for tourism and a premier venue for sporting events,

Helyn Clack
Cabinet Member for Community Services
25 June 2013

Question (6) from Mr Brian Catt

I wish to question Councillor Furey's report on specifics regarding the claims made for the gasifier design and its appropriateness within the revised waste plan, as follows:

Given the very limited and universally unsatisfactory results of waste gasification experiences elsewhere, would it not now be more prudent on the grounds of value for money, fiscal risk and health and safety risk to the visiting and surrounding public, in a very populous area, to instead use Charlton Lane as an RDF plant, to feed the best possible EfW incineration in safer locations based on the lowest possible cost and maximum energy recovery, as this market develops in the face of over capacity and massive reductions in fuel through better recycling? Some European countries are already importing dry waste for this reason, including the Netherlands importing Surrey's.

Reply:

Long term markets for Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) supply to merchant plants are uncertain in the same way as long-term markets for supply of waste into conventional merchant energy from waste plants.

In addition there is a risk that the required quality specification for RDF will change over time, and that the RDF manufacturing plant would become outdated. That is why it is preferable to design an RDF plant to work with a specific combustion or gasification plant.

The value for money analysis will consider various alternatives to building the Eco Park within the SITA contract. One of these options will be to use merchant energy from waste facilities for Surrey's waste.

John Furey
Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and Environment
25 June 2013