

South London Waste Partnership

Beddington Lane Energy Recovery and Recycling Centre

Briefing Pack – January 2012

Introduction

The South London Waste Partnership has announced leading resource recovery and renewable energy company Viridor as the preferred bidder for its 25-year residual waste treatment contract.

This follows a comprehensive competitive procurement process to ensure the South London Waste Partnership (comprising the London Boroughs of Croydon, Kingston, Merton and Sutton) meets its statutory landfill diversion targets and avoids hefty landfill levies and fines – landfill tax is set to reach £80 per tonne in 2014.

At present over 200,000 tonnes of waste from households in Croydon, Kingston, Merton and Sutton goes to landfill. Viridor's proposal is to develop a state-of-the-art Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) at its existing landfill and recycling site in Beddington, Sutton. This facility would have the capacity to process up to 275,000 tonnes of waste.

Viridor's £200 million investment would create around 40 permanent jobs and many more during construction.

Wider environmental benefits would include the landfill diversion of up to 95 per cent of waste delivered to the facility and the generation of up to 26MW of electricity. This would power the facility itself and supply over 22MW to the National Grid – enough to supply 30,000 homes. A potential local heat distribution network could provide surplus heat to local housing or businesses and increase the efficiency of the facility further.

In addition, the proposed ERF would enable completion and restoration of the landfill site sooner than currently anticipated, creating habitats for wildlife to thrive and an open space for the local community.

In order to submit a planning application for the proposed facility, Viridor will undertake a comprehensive consultation with stakeholders and the local community during early 2012. This will provide an opportunity for people across South London to provide feedback, ask questions and find out more about the scope of the development and the benefits for the local economy.

Details on the consultation are being finalised and further information on how to get involved will be made available shortly. People who wish to register an interest in being kept informed throughout the process can email

beddington@viridor.co.uk

As a Local Planning Authority, Sutton has a role to test the proposals when the planning application is received in a way that is absolutely separate from the Waste Partnership's procurement process. As part of the formal planning consultation process, Sutton Planning Officers will consult a number of independent experts such as the Environment Agency and the Health Protection Agency, before making a recommendation to Councillors on Sutton's Development Control Committee on whether to approve or refuse this application.

Viridor plan to submit a planning application in May. Following the submission, the Local Planning Authority will conduct a further listening exercise, where there will be further opportunities for local people to have their say.

In the meantime the following information provides background on the site and the proposed development at this stage.



Beddington Recycling Centre and Landfill Site



Beddington Landfill Operations



Beddington Waste Transfer Building

Why Beddington?

Viridor's Beddington site is currently home to major recycling and composting facilities which provide essential recycling services to the South London Waste Partnership authorities and local businesses. There is a large landfill operation where non-recyclable waste from the Waste Partnership and local businesses is land filled. The site is close to the centre of the four authorities that make up the Waste Partnership which helps minimise vehicle mileage.

Beddington Lane is a busy industrial area dominated by warehouses, a large sewage treatment works, other waste management operations and transport depots. There are also a small number of houses and an out of town retail area.

What is Viridor proposing?

Viridor is proposing to build an Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) at the Beddington Lane site to process up to 275,000 tonnes of residual waste from households and local businesses. An ERF is effectively a small power station that uses non-hazardous 'bin bag' waste as fuel. There are over 420 similar facilities across Europe. The ERF will be designed to produce 26 megawatts of electricity – enough to power the facility itself plus 30,000 homes. A by-product of the combustion process is 'bottom ash' – this would also be recycled ensuring over 95 per cent of inputs are recovered or recycled.

One of the key factors in the community consultation is likely to be the visual impact of the facility. Viridor is currently working on the designs in order to minimise this. Visual impact will form a key part of the planning application which will be considered by the Planning Authority.

Other factors which will be fully considered as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment include traffic, noise, odours, air quality and emissions, environmental and health protection, archaeology and ecology.

If the Waste Partnership formally awards the contract to Viridor, and should planning consent be granted, the ERF would take approximately three years to construct.

Air quality and health

The primary function of any controlled waste treatment process is to protect human health and the environment.

Modern Energy Recovery Facilities use tried and tested technologies and are subject to stringent European and UK legislation. The ERF would have an extensive air pollution control system to clean the combustion gases to ensure they comply with regulatory emission limits before they are released to atmosphere through a chimney. The plant would only operate once an Environmental Permit is issued by the Environment Agency, who will be responsible for regulating thereafter. Permit conditions would ensure that local air quality is not compromised.

Vehicles would deliver waste into an enclosed building and the waste would be combusted at high temperatures to ensure the process is odourless. The majority of the emissions from the chimney would be made up of water and carbon dioxide. The remainder would comprise negligible trace levels of other substances, all of which will be listed and assessed in detail within the planning application's Environmental Impact Assessment.

Modern energy recovery (energy from waste) plants must meet tight emissions standards and therefore make a very small contribution to any background levels of air pollution. Many independent and Government reviews have studied potential health impacts of energy from waste facilities, including an extensive study by the Health Protection Agency in 2010. These experts conclude that modern, well managed facilities are safe and do not have any detectable health effects.

Environment and amenity

We cannot continue land filling large volumes of residual waste. Energy Recovery, working alongside waste minimisation and recycling, has a valuable role to play in improving our efficiency and reducing the overall carbon impacts of waste management.

The South London Waste Partnership is committed to maximising recycling levels and promoting waste prevention. The Partnership has agreed an innovative Declining Tonnage Agreement with Viridor. This agreement would enable the

Partnership to send declining amounts of household waste to the proposed facility over the 25 year life of the contract. It ensures that the four Partner Boroughs would be able continue to divert waste away from landfill by energetically and enthusiastically encouraging residents to reduce, reuse and recycle.

The proposed facility would only cater for residual (post-recycling) municipal waste and would allow for recycling levels of 60 per cent and beyond. Case studies from across Europe show that countries with the highest recycling rates have complementary energy recovery facilities to minimise non-recyclable waste sent to landfill.

The facility would be sound-proofed and all operations would take place within it to ensure acceptable noise levels. Traffic levels will be considered when Sutton Council appraises the planning application. Viridor must ensure that traffic movements are suitable for the local road network and that it doesn't compromise local air quality standards. Potential highway and junction improvements will also be considered.

Habitat creation and management is an important feature of the Beddington site as the landfill is finished and restored. The rest of the site includes lakes and pools, reed beds, scrub and grassland and old sludge beds and this is managed for conservation and future amenity purposes. The development of the proposed ERF could bring forward the delivery of the wider site restoration as part of a country park and this will be confirmed in the planning application.

Finance and value for money

Last year the South London Waste Partnership spent over £10 million of tax payers' money on Landfill Tax. This will rise to £16 million over the next three years unless the Partnership finds an alternative to landfill.

Central government introduced the landfill tax to encourage recycling and to make more environmentally responsible waste treatment and disposal options, such as energy recovery facilities, more attractive.

The four boroughs that make up the South London Waste Partnership (Croydon, Kingston, Merton and Sutton) are already delivering efficient recycling services in their areas contributing towards large savings. However, the need to treat residual waste – what is left after reusing, recycling and composting – remains. Viridor would invest £200 million to deliver a facility which is a cost-effective alternative to landfill disposal for residual waste.

It is estimated that the four authorities in the Waste Partnership would save around £200 million over the 25-year contract period. Each council would decide how to best utilise the savings which result from landfill diversion. For instance, they could contribute towards the substantial savings that councils are required to find over the next four years as a result of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review. This would help protect investment in front line community services.

Community consultation

Viridor is developing a planning application to be submitted to the local planning authority – in this case the London Borough of Sutton. As part of this process, Viridor will undertake a comprehensive public consultation to gather feedback from local residents and other stakeholders about the proposed development.

The public consultation will start in February and it is expected to conclude in late April. Everyone in the local area will have an opportunity to request information and provide Viridor with their views on the proposed facility.

Consultation activities will include:

- Community meetings and local exhibitions – where local people will be able to discuss the details of the proposals with Viridor and the Waste Partnership
- Online resources – dedicated web pages and contact opportunities through social media
- Newsletter – distributed to households in the Beddington area, providing details of the proposals and how to get involved in the consultation

Information will also be published online as the planning application development progresses – www.viridor.co.uk/beddington-erf

In the meantime, enquiries can be submitted to Viridor by:

- Email: beddington@viridor.co.uk
- Post: Communications Team, Viridor, 42 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, Kent, ME19 4AJ.
- Telephone: 01732 229 200

Finding out more from the Planning Authority

Viridor and the South London Waste Partnership will work towards signing the residual waste contract during 2012. Viridor will then conduct the Environmental Impact Assessment and submit a planning application for the ERF around May.

Once the application is submitted by Viridor to the London Borough of Sutton, the council will undertake its own engagement with the local community and other organisations such as the Environment Agency, the Highways Authority, etc, to inform its decision making process.

Further information can be obtained via:

- Email: Beddington@sutton.gov.uk
- Twitter: <http://twitter.com/#!/lbsuttonnews>
- Freepost: Beddington Team, C/O Communications, FREEPOST, CN2117, Civic Offices, St Nicholas Way, Sutton. SM1 1BR
- Telephone: 020 8770 6900
- Attending one of the local events

Summary and key benefits

Viridor's proposal is a safe, environmentally sustainable and cost-effective way of dealing with household waste.

- **Safety:** All of the credible scientific evidence shows that modern, well-managed Energy Recovery Facilities are safe. A Health Protection Agency review of the evidence in 2010 confirmed this. If planning permission is granted the Energy Recovery Facility proposed for Beddington would use the latest technology to thoroughly clean any emissions before they leave the facility. The proposed facility would also have to operate under an Environmental Permit issued and regulated by the Environment Agency –

the government body charged with ensuring that local air quality is not compromised.

- **Environmentally sustainable:** Residual household waste is currently buried at the Beddington Lane landfill site. This site is filling up fast and an alternative must be found. An Energy Recovery Facility would make it possible to divert 95 per cent of our residual household waste away from landfill. Instead of being buried in the ground, this waste would be turned into 26 Megawatts of electricity – enough to power the facility itself and supply 30,000 homes. The facility would also enable the work to restore the existing landfill site to amenity parkland for the Beddington Country Park and Wandle Valley Regional Park to be accelerated.
- **Cost-effective:** Last year, the Waste Partnership spent £10 million of tax payers' money sending household waste to landfill. This will rise to £16 million over the next three years, unless an alternative is found. Every pound the Partnership sends to the Treasury in Landfill Tax is a pound that cannot be invested locally. The new contract with Viridor would see the four Partner Boroughs save money from day one, and over the 25-year lifetime of the contract it would save around £200 million.
- The facility would also deliver local investment and create approximately 40 new permanent jobs, as well as many more jobs during the construction phase.