

UBB responds to report commissioned by GlosVain

Urbaser Balfour Beatty (UBB) is concerned to see that such a detailed report making serious allegations contains a number of highly significant errors that have led to incorrect conclusions.

The facts about the project have not changed and this report provides no new information. Unfortunately the report continues to misrepresent the facts about a project that stands to save Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) £190m over 25 years, help divert 92% of residual waste from landfill and generate enough electricity to power 25,000 homes. Furthermore, it will do this in Gloucestershire, representing a significant inward investment to the local economy.

There are three key inaccuracies that UBB feels are the most important to address. These are:

- **Recovery facility:** Javelin Park will be an 'R1' Recovery facility under European criteria as opposed to a disposal facility as claimed in the report. The calculations in the report are simply inaccurate or out of date, which has resulted in misleading conclusions. The Environment Agency (EA) confirmed the facility's capability for R1 status on 7 March 2013 as part of its Design Stage Assessment.
- **APC residues:** The report implies that all Energy from Waste (EfW) facilities are illegal because of the production of Air Pollution Control (APC) residues, which are classified as hazardous waste. This is untrue - it is not illegal. Were this to be the case, almost all industry in the UK would currently be illegal, such as building or dismantling cars, since most industry produces some hazardous waste.
- **Kerbside recycling:** The report asserts that the facility is flawed because it does not propose front end recycling on site. This is because in Gloucestershire recycling is separated at the kerbside for collection by local councils. The proposed scheme is based on handling the residual waste left over after recycling 60% of municipal waste by 2020 and 70% thereafter. This is similar to the levels of the highest recycling regions in Europe.

There are various other claims made in the report which we address below, though this is by no means an exhaustive list, and further detail can be provided on request.

Private Finance Initiative (PFI) credits: The executive summary of the report states that GCC lost its PFI credits due to overcapacity of EfW in the UK. This is not true – the then new Coalition government's view was the UK Landfill Directive targets could be met by the capacity already in development; however even if the targets were met, it would still mean that vast quantities of waste would still require treatment, or continue to be sent for landfill at huge economic and environmental cost. The executive summary of the Ynys report does not reflect this and appears to be deliberately misleading.

Eunomia Report: Throughout the report there are many references to the Eunomia report on waste infrastructure capacity. Eunomia concludes that there will be overcapacity in residual waste treatment infrastructure by 2015/16, but only by making a number of questionable assumptions. The findings of this report are not being used in government policy.

APC residues: The report has quoted a short passage from the Landfill Directive out of context. The full quote is: "Whereas both the quantity and hazardous nature of waste

intended for landfill should be reduced where appropriate; whereas the handling of waste should be facilitated and its recovery enhanced; whereas the use of treatment processes should therefore be encouraged to ensure that landfill is compatible with the objectives of this Directive; whereas sorting is included in the definition of treatment”.

This clearly means that one of the aims of the Directive is to ensure that waste is treated before being landfilled. In the report, this quote only includes the first fifteen words, and as such it might be understood to mean that hazardous waste should not be generated, but it is obvious that this is a misinterpretation of the context.

In addition, the report misrepresents article 10 of the Waste Framework Directive to suggest that residual waste from kerbside collections should not be mixed with residual waste from commercial and industrial sources before it is all used for energy recovery. Article 10(2), which is referenced in the report, simply does not say this.

Residual waste: The report suggests that any waste collected from a householder who does not do recycling is not classified as residual waste. This is plainly false. Later, the report attempts to claim that not all residual waste is really residual waste - this is not true, it is confusing and misleading.

Article 15(1): The report suggests that Article 15(1) of the Waste Framework Directive claims incineration discourages recycling. Article 15(1) of the directive simply requires Member States to make sure that waste producers take responsibility for their waste. As the Waste Disposal Authority for Gloucestershire, GCC is carrying out its duty with respect to this article - were it to continue being landfilled, GCC would be failing in its duty.

Municipal waste levels: The potential quantity of municipal waste was tested at length at the Public Hearing into GCC’s Waste Core Strategy. GCC presented a series of projections based on a number of potential scenarios. These scenarios predicted that up to 2027 there would be the need to manage between 108,000 and 145,000 tonnes of municipal waste. The Inspector found the plan to be robust. In addition, the report fails to recognise that approximately 200,000 tonnes of residual commercial and industrial waste will continue to be generated annually in Gloucestershire that could be partially dealt with by Javelin Park. The proposed facility has therefore been based on this established need for waste management capacity in the County.

Landfill Capacity: GCC’s Waste Core Strategy states that “For non-hazardous landfill, having regard to the current voidspace available and rates of tipping, it is estimated that there is at least 10-13 years remaining capacity.” It is clearly therefore not sustainable to continue tipping at the current rates and it is for this reason that GCC are looking at alternative waste management options further up the waste hierarchy, to maximise the recovery of value from the waste stream through recycling and energy recovery. This is in line with EU and UK policy and the overall drive to reduce waste going to landfill. The assertion that there is sufficient landfill capacity is on the basis that GCC meets its ambitious 60% recycling rate and, very significantly, that the residual waste treatment facilities (such as Javelin Park) are delivered.

Landfill Allowances and Trading Scheme (LATS): The report suggests that the withdrawal of LATS removes any financial justification for the facility. This is incorrect. When announcing the ending of the trading scheme, Defra stated that: “LATS is no longer the major driver for

diverting waste. The Landfill Tax is now much more of an incentive for local authorities to reduce the waste they send to landfill...” The announcement can be read in full here - <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/local-authorities/landfill-scheme/>.

Landfill Tax is now the key driver for landfill diversion and the ongoing significant rise in tax continues to increase the need for alternative facilities to manage residual waste.

As stated above, the proposed Javelin Park facility will save Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) £190m over 25 years, help divert 92% of residual waste from landfill and generate enough electricity to power 25,000 homes. And it will do this in Gloucestershire, representing a significant inward investment to the local economy.