

10 December 2012

**FAO GlosVAIN**

Dear Ms Oppenheimer,

I am writing to you in your capacity as chair of GlosVAIN and will be publishing this letter online in the spirit of openness. I would also be grateful if you would convey the contents of this letter to your group.

Urbaser Balfour Beatty is aware of the concerns some people have about the proposed energy from waste facility at Javelin Park. We have responded to these concerns with the facts about the project, yet feel that some parties are continuing to spread misinformation that is designed to scare people.

GlosVAIN recently published some maps which suggest the facility would result in a “toxic cloud” over large parts of the county. We also note GlosVAIN’s recent claims that the proposed energy from waste facility would have a “disturbing impact on local air quality”.

*These claims are wrong and this letter sets the facts straight.*

There will be no visible “smoke” from the stack. The only thing that may occasionally be visible is water vapour, which will mostly only be seen over the site itself.

GlosVAIN’s maps suggest a visible plume of over 20km from the facility. This is a misleading exaggeration – in reality it will be a tiny fraction of that distance (at a maximum of 262 metres from the stack, and even then only in worst case weather conditions).

**Strict emissions controls:** Any form of combustion, be it petrol in your car or your garden bonfire, causes chemical reactions within the materials being burnt. These generate compounds, such as dioxins and particles, which if released into the atmosphere can be harmful to human health and the environment if they are not properly controlled.

Almost half of any energy from waste facility building will be taken up by the air pollution control (APC) system. This works in two ways. Firstly it helps to reduce the levels of the dioxins and particles that are created in the first place by controlling the gases within the facility’s furnace. Then it catches, filters and cleans the gases through a sophisticated flue gas treatment process.

The small amount of emissions from the stack will be thoroughly dispersed in the atmosphere. Urbaser Balfour Beatty and professional advisors have followed national and international best practice guidelines so we can be confident that the facility will not pose a risk to human health.

**Local air quality standards set by international bodies:** Local Air Quality Objectives are set by the European Union, based on research by the World Health Organisation. The local Air Quality Objectives set the allowable safe limit of pollutants in the air we breathe. By law we need to make sure that emissions do not result in local air quality exceeding these limits.

*The contribution of the facility's emissions will be so low that air quality will remain well within these limits.*

Following advice from the Environment Agency, we have modelled potential environmental impacts of the facility based on the highest emission levels allowed, despite forecast emissions from the facility actually being much lower.

*This found that the concentration of particulates at ground level would be so low that it is considered by the Environment Agency to be insignificant (which means that the plant will contribute less than 1% of the Air Quality Objective).*

**Looking at health impact:** Urbaser Balfour Beatty chose to carry out an additional "Human Health Impact Assessment" using the Environment Agency's recommended approach. This assessment looks at the potential impact upon people living in local residential areas and consuming food produced there (including milk, eggs, meat and vegetables). These days of course our food comes from much farther afield, but the study provides a useful scenario so we can be sure the impacts are not harmful.

*The study showed that levels of dioxin emissions would be negligible (which means the plant will contribute less than 1% of the Tolerable Daily Intake over a lifetime).*

I would like to take this opportunity to reassure you that Urbaser is a very experienced waste management company. Our energy from waste facilities are built and operated to the highest safety standards and have never breached emissions limits. We have followed all best practice guidelines and have employed other experienced professionals to give us balanced, accurate advice based on the facts.

We hope that you will be able to represent the above information on your website and any associated publications in the interests of accuracy and fair representation.

Further information about the project and how emissions will be controlled can be found both on Urbaser Balfour Beatty's website [www.ubbglooucestershire.co.uk](http://www.ubbglooucestershire.co.uk) and on Gloucestershire County Council's website [www.recycleforglooucestershire.com/recover](http://www.recycleforglooucestershire.com/recover).

Finally, it is important to note that the planning application is considered on its merits. This facility will meet an urgent need to divert Gloucestershire's non-recyclable waste from landfill. It will provide a local solution for the county's waste, generate 14.5MW electricity and save Gloucestershire County Council up to £190 million over the life of the contract.

Yours sincerely

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