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For immediate release

Covanta to help local councils

Covanta Energy, which is seeking to build an Energy-from-Waste plant and Materials Recovery Facility at Rookery Pit South, Stewartby, has agreed to make a contribution towards the cost of officer time to be incurred by the shared Bedfordshire minerals and waste planning service.

Covanta's planning application is currently before the Infrastructure Planning Commission for examination. A decision on the application is expected before the end of this year.

If the application (known as a Development Consent Order) is successful, several legal documents will need to be drawn up and agreed, some of these with the local councils. Those which deal specifically with planning conditions to control environmental impacts and the provision of community benefits will benefit from this financial help. Covanta has agreed to pay the councils' requested sum of £10,000 to help them with these costs. This arrangement is a Government recommended way forward for helping major developments through the planning process and has been adopted by other councils and developers elsewhere in the country.

Covanta's Managing Director said: "This payment will help offset the councils' costs. We are looking to have legally binding agreements on issues such as lorry routes, discounted electricity for neighbours and a generous community trust fund. This will be in everybody's best interest. We are happy to have our promises carved in legal stone.

"This cash aid doesn't buy us any favours with the councils but we are prepared to do what is reasonable to help the process along."

ENDS

For more information contact:

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Notes to editor:

Shared Minerals and Waste Planning Service between Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire councils. In relation to development management for mineral extraction and waste management, there is a shared service between Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough councils, known as the Joint Minerals and Waste Planning Team. This shared service is hosted by Central Bedfordshire on behalf of both councils.

For further information contact the Central Bedfordshire Council Press Office on 0300 300 8701