

Power for local employer

Covanta's proposed energy-from-waste (EfW) plant in Middlewich will provide combined heat and power to reduce the energy costs of a major local employer.

The collaboration with British Salt, which has a workforce of 125 people, will enable the company to operate more competitively and underpin future viability.

British Salt managing director Rob Jones said: "Given recent closures in the local area, at RHM and Albion Chemicals, we are naturally anxious to ensure that British Salt is in the best possible position to ride out these difficult economic times."

"This proposal by Covanta will be hugely beneficial in supporting a long-standing and well-established local business that employs a sizeable local workforce, and will help safeguard our future in Middlewich, through significantly reducing energy costs."

Mr Jones said that the manufacture of salt was an energy-intensive process and the company was continually aiming to



■ British Salt's Middlewich plant

improve energy efficiency. Natural gas, the current source of energy, was British Salt's single largest cost and had recently been subject to an unprecedented period of volatility.

"We are actively seeking alternative energy supply arrangements to ensure our long-term competitiveness. Success in this business-critical area has the potential to impact significantly upon the profitability of the company and its long-term sustainable future in Middlewich."

Mr Jones said an extra bonus was that energy from the EfW plant was not derived from fossil fuels and would help to reduce the company's carbon footprint.

British Salt is the leading UK producer of vacuum salt, supplying its product for food, water treatment, animal feed and industrial applications.

A presence in Middlewich since 1969, it is one of the town's biggest employers, with half its workforce drawn from the town itself.

At the same time, the link-up will ensure that the EfW plant makes maximum use of any surplus heat and operates at the highest efficiency. The plant will also supply enough electricity into the National Grid for around 50,000 homes.

Covanta Managing Director Malcolm Chilton said: "We are delighted to be working closely with a major local business on the supply of high-pressure steam, and welcome the benefits it will bring locally, in addition to increasing the efficiency of our EfW proposals."

He added that Covanta was also talking to other businesses about combined heat and power that could be used in a range of industries.

High efficiency cuts carbon emissions

■ The UK Government is keen to encourage Combined Heat and Power (CHP) facilities which help to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. The process involves capturing the excess heat produced as a by-product of electricity generation, with the resulting hot water or steam distributed, via a network of pipes, to nearby businesses, public buildings or community housing schemes.

CHP is widely used in Scandinavia and other parts of Europe, however, the process is most efficient when the heat can be used on site or in the near vicinity. Overall efficiency is somewhat reduced when the heat is transported over longer distances and, therefore, cools down.

Two UK examples are the cities of Sheffield and Nottingham, where the combustion of household waste generates enough power to heat more than 8,000 homes and civic buildings, including a hospital, schools, sports centres and universities.



You've shaped our choice

Following the initial public consultations in February 2008, it was clear that the curved design was most popular with local residents, and this has now been incorporated into the plans. Almost 300 people visited the exhibitions, where they were able to talk to project staff on a one-to-one basis, and more than 160 visitors filled in questionnaires. The results show that the vast majority of residents prefer EfW to landfill as a general means of treating residual waste after recycling.

The next steps

Covanta has now finalised its comprehensive Environmental Statement (ES), which runs to several volumes and examines all the potential impacts of the development.

Topics covered include:

- Air quality
- Traffic
- Socio-economic impacts
- Cultural heritage and archaeology
- Land quality
- Water quality

- Landscape and visual impact
- Ecology

The ES forms a key part of the planning application that will be submitted to Cheshire County Council by early March, 2009. These documents will then be available for the public to study at the planning offices, in local libraries and via the internet.

The County Council will consult a range of other organisations, including local authorities and environmental groups, as

well as members of the public, before reaching a decision through its Planning Committee.

A much briefer Non-Technical Summary will also be produced and made available free of charge from the Covanta website www.covantaenergy.co.uk, or by ringing the Freephone inquiry line.

Freephone inquiries

0800 1695290

Location: Midpoint 18 Business Park, next to the end of Pochin Way.

Waste capacity: 370,000 tonnes a year, a reduction from the 450,000 tonnes originally envisaged.

Electrical output: 35.5MW, enough electricity for around 50,000 homes.

Fuel: Non-hazardous residual wastes (Municipal Solid Wastes, MSW) from homes, shops, offices and businesses.

Technology: Modern moving grate.

Front-End Recycling Plant: The facility will have front-end capacity for the separation of recyclate and treatment and recovery of recyclables for 185,000 tonnes a year of MSW that has been subject to no such prior separation, treatment or recovery. The mechanical plant will recover materials such as ferrous and non-ferrous metals, glass, and plastics, for recycling.

PROJECT FACTS

Central Thermal

Treatment Plant: The facility will have central capacity for thermal treatment of 370,000 tonnes a year of burnable MSW that has already been subject to separation of recyclate and/or treatment and recovery of recyclables.

Back-End Aggregate and Metals

Recycling Plant: The facility will have back-end capacity for the recovery of further ferrous and non-ferrous metals, plus the production - to an established quality standard - of recycled aggregate from bottom ash.



Tallest Building: 48 metres.

Stack height: 80 metres.

Project cost: £200 million.

Land-take: 22 acres.

Construction timeframe: Three years.

The Middlewich EfW plant will have a number of advantages:

- A cheaper option than landfill
- Recyclables will be extracted
- Landfill is avoided
- Electricity is generated
- Provision for heat and power supplies to local businesses

The EfW plant is neither substitute nor competition for the recycling of waste, and it will remain important that increasing amounts of waste are recycled in order to meet Government targets.

Reduction in need for landfill space

Covanta's new EfW plant will dramatically reduce the amount of landfill space needed in the County. The original proposal envisaged using household waste as the main fuel, but the revised scheme will take a mix of similar waste from houses, shops, offices and businesses.

The plant's capacity has also been reduced to 370,000 tonnes a year, a reduction of 18% from the original plans.

Covanta Managing Director Malcolm Chilton said: "Our amended proposal will still ensure that significant quantities of waste are treated in a more sustainable way than landfill."

Covanta is moving ahead with its EfW proposals at Middlewich after purchasing the site from landowner Pochin.

The 22-acre plot, adjacent to the end of Pochin Way, is bordered on all sides by existing industrial and commercial premises and runs parallel to the Northwich-Crewe railway line.

It is designated for employment use in Congleton Borough's Local Plan and already has

Amended proposal will still ensure that significant quantities of waste are treated in a more sustainable way than landfill



Left: Malcolm Chilton. Above: cans for recycling

planning consent for commercial development. A mechanical pre-treatment plant will recover materials such as metals, glass, and plastics, for recycling.

The EfW plant will burn 370,000 tonnes of waste a year and generate 35.5MW of electricity, enough for 50,000 homes.

Metals will be also be extracted after combustion and recycled.

There are currently about 20 energy-from-waste plants in the UK, which together treat more than three million tonnes of waste. In 2006/7, 58% of household waste was sent to landfill, while 31% was recycled or composted and 11% processed through EfW.

Search for cleaner waste solutions

Landfill has, until recently, been the most common way to dispose of our rubbish, but a reduction in landfill space, greater environmental awareness and new legislation now require the UK, as well as the rest of the EU, to find greener and less polluting solutions. UK Government policy is therefore to:

- Avoid or minimise the creation of waste
- Re-use waste where possible
- Recycle waste or convert it to compost
- Recover energy from waste
- Landfill (as a last resort)

The Government's Waste Strategy predicts an increase in the use of EfW. By 2020, the Government expects 25% of municipal waste to be used to generate energy, compared to 11% today. It also expects landfilled business waste to fall 20% by 2010 compared to 2004. EfW is intended as a disposal option that follows recycling and/or composting and offers major advantages:

- Reducing waste volumes by 98%, leading to a massive reduction in the need for landfill
- Minimising emissions of methane, a powerful greenhouse gas produced in large quantities by organic matter buried in landfill sites
- A readily available fuel source that's unlikely to run out
- Less dependence on imported fossil fuels, with prices tied to oil and markets subject to political pressures



Confidence in Covanta

As the largest operator of EfW facilities in the world, Covanta is in a strong financial position, despite the tough economic climate that has left banks reluctant to lend to businesses.

Covanta Managing Director Malcolm Chilton emphasised the company's commitment to the Middlewich proposals and said the scheme was in a position to move ahead financially irrespective of the current crisis.

"We would be looking to secure an investment package from the banks as a matter of course, but can also rely on our own financial structures if the situation requires it."

"This is thanks to our background of success and our absolute confidence in the EfW process as a sound way to deal sustainably with waste."

Covanta owns and operates 38 EfW plants worldwide, processing over 14 million tonnes of waste each year.

300 jobs to be created during construction

The £200 million investment in the EfW facility will also generate economic spin-offs in the surrounding area, including:

- Up to 300 jobs during the construction period
- Up to 50 permanent new jobs
- Contract opportunities for local businesses both during construction and operations

Cheaper electricity for town's residents

Covanta's offer to provide lower-cost electricity to local households remains in place – and the discount has now been confirmed as at least 10%. The discount will be available to all residents living within the Middlewich Town Council boundary. Any householders wishing to take part should register for the scheme in advance, for a minimum 12-month period. The discount will be made on the lowest price in a basket of standard published tariffs from a range of electricity suppliers, eg, EON, EDF, Npower, Scottish Power, etc, and the figure will be calculated annually on a given date.

Our commitment to the community

If the EfW plant goes ahead, Covanta will make a positive contribution to Middlewich life with the establishment of a community fund and a local liaison group.

During the plant's first operational year, Covanta will make a one-off payment of £150,000 into a fund, followed by £50,000 a year for as long as operations continue. With an estimated plant lifespan beyond 25 years, this gives a total of more than £1 million.

The fund will be available for the benefit of local groups,

projects and initiatives. Covanta will liaise with community representatives to agree on how the fund can be administered fairly and independently distributed.

In addition, the company will set up a community liaison group that will meet on a regular basis during the three-year construction period, and continue during operations. The group will aim to resolve any issues that arise locally, and will consist of representatives from neighbouring households, councils, businesses and environmental groups, and other interested parties.



Middlewich Eastern Bypass

Covanta's investment in Middlewich greatly assists the public-private partnership to complete the Middlewich Eastern Bypass. The bypass will relieve congestion in the town centre as well as improving access to the Midpoint 18 Business Park.

The last phase of the bypass will extend Pochin Way southwards to a new roundabout on the A533 towards Sandbach, near Tetton Bridge.

Local road network

An independent traffic assessment has demonstrated that traffic levels associated with the proposed EfW site are not significant enough to have a detrimental impact on the neighbouring road networks. The levels are considerably less than a typical distribution centre development, for which the site already has planning consent.