Minutes of the Northacre Resource Recovery Centre liaison committee meeting held on 25 September 2024 at 4pm

Present

Wiltshire Council
Cllr Carole King - Westbury North (**CK)**
Cllr Suzanne Wickham – Ethandune (**SW**)
Sarah Valdus, Director – Environment (**SV**)

Westbury Town Council
Cllr Jane Russ (**JR)**

Heywood Parish Council
Cllr Francis Morland (**FM**)

Environment Agency
Tom Fowler (**TF**) via Teams

Arla Foods
George Nicholls (**GN**)

Hills Waste Solutions
Simon Allen (**SA**)
Paul Scriven (**PS**)

The Hills Group
Alex Henderson (**AH**)

	ACTION
1. Apologies	
Cllr Gordon King, Jo Emery and Martin Litherland	
2. Minutes of the previous meeting	
Accepted.	
3. Update on site operations and environmental compliance	
PS reported that since the last meeting there had been no operational issues of any significance and only one minor issue with the internal crane. **PS** stated that the site was due to shut down for preventative planned maintenance for 5 days in the second week of November. **CW** asked what happened to waste when the plant was closed and **PS** confirmed that waste was diverted to Lower Compton for either forwarding to the Lakeside EFW or landfill. **PS** advised that the plant's bio-filter was to be replaced in January/ February 2025 and that the bio-filter material used would change from woodchip to clay pellets; a material widely used in MBT plants in Europe. **JR** asked if the bio-filter change was being undertaken due to the level of odour complaints and if it give rise to an increase in complaints whilst the bio-filter was being changed ? **PS** advised that the bio-filter change was being undertaken in January to minimise odour risk and the bio-filter material being replaced earlier to avoid a repeat of issues arising during the last	

material change. **PS** stated that whilst there had been a number of odour complaints since the last meeting that those investigated by the company had been identified as being at a low level. **TF** stated that the Environment Agency had seen an increase in complaints in the summer, but these had tailed off and confirmed that 50 complaints had been received in July, 40 complaints in August and 7 so far to date in September. **TF** advised that Environmental Agency Officers had attended areas from where complaints had been received and the MBT site on numerous occasions over this period and that none had been recorded on the Environmental Agency intensity level scoring system as strong, very strong or extremely strong level (level 4 or above). **TF** advised that intensity levels recorded had been very faint or faint (level 1 or 2) and at barely noticeable levels. **TF** stated that officers had not identified levels of odour in residential areas above level 1 or 2 intensity, but had on occasions identified distinct odour intensity (level 3) in the industrial estate on which the MBT site was located. **TF** advised that the Environment Agency therefore concluded that there was odour in the community it was not at level 5 or 6, but at much lower levels than being reported and being transitory in nature and at a level that were typical for a waste operation of its type. **TF** stated that the Environment Agency would continue to work with the company to ensure that the operation met its permit obligations under its odour management plan. **JR** stated that the Town Council and Local MP had met with the Environment Agency and discussed possible options to change the plant operations that may reduce odour including additional measures relating to the tipping doors configuration and asked who would pay for these capital improvements. **PS** stated that items identified by the Environment Agency were under consideration by the company and that the company had been given till the end of October to respond. **TF** stated that once the response had been received from the company the Environment Agency would report back to the Town Council. **JR** stated that this was not addressing the perceived issues in the community regarding the odour in a timely manner and that finances should not delay action being taken to address the matter **SA** stated that the situation was frustrating as the odour intensity being reported as being attributable to the plant did not match the company's investigations and gave the example of complaints being made from the community of level 5 and 6 odour intensity when this was impossible due to wind at the time being in the opposite direction. **SA** stated that consultants had been appointed to evaluate the impact of introducing changes to fast action doors and operational impacts on negative pressure and these would be considered. **SA** stated that the lessons learnt would mean that issues with the last bio-filter exchange would not be repeated and highlighted that the action to replace the bio-filter material in the New Year was at a significant cost to the company. **SW** stated that the community were sensitive and extra vigilant to waste odours from the site. **SA** stated that the company maintained high standards to ensure that its operations were compliant and in accordance with its environmental permit and action was taken to mitigate impact of any odour offsite should it occur. **TF** then explained that the intensity scoring system, stating that it was based on Environmental Agency guidance and confirmed that officers attending were all trained in odour intensity detection, undertook acuity testing and were also rotated to avoid acclimatisation. **TF** advised that the low level of odour made it difficult to determine the root cause and the purpose of the odour management plan was to minimise odour arising from such a waste	**TF**

operation. **TF** to issue a note on the odour intensity scoring system for use by the liaison meeting members in the community. **SW** asked when would the Environment Agency feedback and odour management plan be reviewed. **TF** replied that the Environment Agency would report back once the biofilter had been changed. **SA** added that the change the bio-filter and its operation would be detailed in the updated odour management plan. **PS** stated that the process for swapping out the bio-filter would be discussed and agreed with the Environment Agency in advance of this being undertaken in the New Year and that the process would take up to 12 weeks. **FM** enquired about whether changes would be made to the tipping doors and additional extraction system installed. **PS** repeated that the effectiveness of this was being evaluated and advised that potential change would not alter the extraction system as air emissions were designed to pass through the bio-filter. **FM** enquired if there had been any fly complaints. **PS** replied that there had been one complaint since the last meeting.	
4. Planning applications	
PS stated that there were no current planning applications. **CK** enquired about the proposed change to the stack height. **PS** advised that this was still under consideration.	
5. Any other business	
SV stated that in relation to the issue discussed earlier on contributions to capital costs by the Council that the contract had a mechanism for sharing expenditure with Hills, and that this would not delay implementation of agreed capital projects within scope of the contract. **CK** asked about collection fleet and if electric vehicles were being considered. **SV** stated that the collection contract was due for renewal in 2026 and whilst the council were still considering their options, but that there would be some positive news on first steps in utilising electric vehicles in the coming weeks. **FM** enquired about the concrete blocks and other materials being stored external onsite next to the biofilter and their use. **PS** explained that these were spare stock items used in the bio hall. There was no other business raised.	
6. Next meeting	
The next meeting, date to be confirmed, will be held in early March 2025 in person at the MBT plant site.	Hills