

# CHAPTER 13

## SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

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### 13.0 CHAPTER 13 SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY ISSUES 2017

In line with the original assessment Gent Fairhead & Co Limited (GFC) will adopt a series of commitments to support regional learning and local development and empowerment, through a pro-active community engagement programme. Following the implementation of the Integrated Waste Management Facility (IWMF) planning permission (ESS/34/15/BTE) and the commencement of enabling works across the site, as the detailed design evolves, the main civil engineering construction activities commence across the site and the eventual commissioning and commencement of the IWMF's commercial operations, GFC remain committed to:

1. Ensure that designs for the construction of the IWMF and related buildings, transport systems and business management systems adopt and integrate sustainability principles as far as is reasonably possible;
2. Develop a community engagement plan in partnership with local representatives and local authorities which seeks to:
  - a. Support the promotion of sustainable waste management in partnership with local community groups;
  - b. Engender creativity with recycling initiatives at the local and regional level;
  - c. Provide small funds which support local recycling initiatives;
  - d. Run competitions for recycling ideas with local schools linked to the IWMF waste treatment, processing and recycling technologies; and
  - e. Provide support for potential supplier companies to undertake WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme) training.
3. Adopt responsible principles and operational practices;
4. Develop and integrate high social and environmental measurement standards throughout operational practices and implement a combination of continuous, routine and regular monitoring of impacts of IWMF and its related activities;
5. Develop incentivisation schemes for industry, businesses and households in partnership with local and regional authorities to encourage recycling across rural areas;
6. Minimise visual impacts of the IWMF by lowering the buildings at least 11 m below ground level and through architectural innovation make the combined heat and power chimney as unobtrusive as possible (as confirmed in the detailed designs now submitted);
7. Compensate for the losses of natural habitat through the planting of species rich scrub and broad leaf woodland; and improve the existing ecological environment through the implementation of planned long term woodland management (as confirmed in the detailed designs now submitted);
8. Publish information regularly to address concerns relating to the IWMF and ensure that this is accessible to all local residents through its continued design and future construction and operation;
9. Deliver an IWMF design which considers the concerns of different stakeholder groups and recommendations made during the public consultation process and relevant stakeholder issues identified by the original SIA;
10. Ensure that the IWMF and Woodhouse Farm are accessible to visitors and the local community;
11. Consider providing financial support for local village initiatives as appropriate, over and above the Community Trust Fund discussed below;

12. Recruitment opportunities should be advertised in the local area to source and support local and regional employment; and
13. Continue its support for the IWMF Site Liaison Group to disseminate information relating to the operation of the IWMF. The IWMF Site Liaison Group will offer the opportunity to review and address local environmental concerns associated with the IWMF operations.

In accordance with the Third Schedule of the Section 106 Agreement, the IWMF Site Liaison Group has already been set up to give local residents and interested parties an opportunity to discuss any matters arising from the planning and future operations of the proposed IWMF. So far the Group has met four times; in October 2014, January 2015, September 2015 and May 2016; in addition, email updates have been offered in December 2016 and January 2017. The Group comprises representatives of Essex County Council, Braintree District Council, the Environment Agency, Rivenhall, Silver End, Bradwell, Coggeshall, Kelvedon and Feering Parish Councils, and the local Community Group.

It is important to note that the principal function of the IWMF Liaison Group is to offer local residents and interested parties an opportunity to discuss any matters arising from IWMF's operations, rather than debate its detailed design and development.

In addition, once the IWMF is operational, under the existing commitments within the Eighth Schedule of the Section 106 agreement, based on the maximum operational throughput of 853,000 tonnes per annum, the Community Trust Fund would receive £42,650 per annum to fund local community projects including, without limitation, any projects in respect of enhancement of the local environment ecology and/or education at the discretion of the Trustees. The Trustees would be representatives from GFC, the Essex County Council, Braintree District Council and any of the local parish councils of Rivenhall, Silver End, Bradwell, Coggeshall, Kelvedon and Feering.

It is proposed that contributions to the Community Trust Fund are increased under the Section 106 agreement to provide funds that could be specifically used for bursaries which could be offered to local students that are proposing to study an environmental science or environmental engineering degree. The number of bursaries and the funds that are offered would need to be managed through by the Trustees and set out within agreed terms of reference.

Furthermore, through the IWMF's Section 106 agreement there is the opportunity that a landscape and environmental fund is established which will allow for the implementation and management of off-site landscape planting. This could be designed to fund the planting of off-site hedgerows and increase tree cover in order to provide visual impact mitigation through landscape restoration in the wider landscape. Funds could be made available to community groups, landowners and parish councils subject to a scheme for the management of the funds and practical projects. Such a fund would need to be managed through a legal agreement.

On 5 October 2015, the Chancellor announced "the biggest transfer of power to our local government in living memory". Central Government will allow local government to keep the rates they collect from business. Across the UK, this equates to a total of £26bn of business rates that will be kept by councils instead of being sent up to Whitehall. At the Rivenhall IWMF Site Liaison Group meeting on 22 January 2015, GFC reported that in accordance with its projected business calculations, it would expect to pay "around £1 Million per year to Braintree District Council to spend on local services through business rates".

A project of this size would also of course, create many jobs in the local area, in addition to potential expansion of other services such as local hotels and restaurants that would be needed for visitors and staff at the IWMF.

Throughout its construction and future operation, the IWMF will provide a number of direct and indirect employment opportunities locally within Essex. About 150 people are expected to be fully employed in the operations on site in addition to many others employed in local transportation, engineering and support firms.

Furthermore, with reference to recent articles associated with the operational status of Essex County Council's Basildon MBT, where Environment Agency data shows Essex County Council landfilled 213,000 tonnes of household waste in 2015/16. In addition, in 2015 Essex County Council awarded a 2 year short-term interim disposal contract to waste management company SITA (recently rebranded as Suez Environment) to receive 180,000 tonnes per annum of the SRF/RDF at its Tilbury Docks facility from where it will be exported to energy-from-waste plants elsewhere in Europe.

Whilst it is technically possible that the IWMF could accept fuel from the Basildon MBT, no contract has been signed, nor negotiations commenced relating to any off-take.

Finally, the proposed refurbishment of Woodhouse Farm will provide a number of facilities with the local community in mind. Firstly, there will be a Visitor/Education Centre which will include a room dedicated to the history of the former WWII airfield and personnel. Secondly, the Education Centre will be made available for use by local parish councils or other identified local community groups as may be agreed by the Site Liaison Group. Finally, GFC would employ staff that would be available to host and educate interested groups, particularly school children and students, who wanted to view the operations and learn about waste minimisation and recycling.