

## Rookery South CLP Meeting 28 Draft Notes

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 – 6.00 pm, Stewartby Room, Rookery South ERF

### Present:

**CLP Members** – Cllr Sue Clark (Cranfield & Marston); Chris Martin (Marston Moretaine PP); Stephen Sleight (MVCRP); Sally Law (Stewartby PC); Neil Wright (Brogborough PC); Clive Baker (Wootton PC).

**Observers/Presenters** – Rookery South Ltd: Patrick Murray (PM); Anita Taylor (AT); Mark Terry (MT); Jonathan Burley – Project Director, Vital Energi; Facilitator: Bob Fisher

**Apologies:** Paddy Kelly (Encyclis); Dee Walker (Central Bedfordshire); Neil Goudie, Emma d'Avilar, (Environment Agency); Marc Frost (Bedford Borough Council); Jennie Thomas (Millbrook PM); Grant Sorrell (Marston Vale Forest Centre); Jean Peall (Lidlington PC); Robina Chatham (Lidlington Resident)

### 1. Introductions

The CLP welcomed Jonathan Burley, from Vital Energi and also Mark Terry, who gave the Facility Manager's update.

### 2. Approval of Notes from Meeting 27 and matters arising

The notes from Meeting 27 were approved.

Wootton PC: At meeting 27, PK said he would investigate carbon neutral fuel for start-ups. Any update? – AT to comment later in meeting.

SC (*inter alia*) – noted absence of EA from this meeting, despite assurance to attend in person twice a year. How can the EA be persuaded to attend? Could the LA encourage this? BF to contact EA and also Bryn Walters.

### 3. Facility Manager's Update (MT) – see slides

**Mark Terry (MT):** Health & Safety update for Q4. He noted that RSL had been awarded Band B environmental compliance by the EA.

Emissions limits, e.g., for NOX, were reduced on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, from 200 mg/m<sup>3</sup> to 180 mg/m<sup>3</sup>.

AT: This is something which was known some time before, even when the Visitor Centre was being installed - this drop had been anticipated, as the industry regulations are constantly changing.

PM: This process of reviewing emissions limits started when the UK was still in the EU and we have retained the output from the review. The new limits have

been applied in the UK by the EA – revised limits apply to all ERFs across the UK and Europe.

MT: The drop in limits also includes HCL (hydrochloric acid), from 10 to 8 and dust, from 10 to 5 in terms of daily limits. As the technology grows and evolves, RSL is obliged to respond.

Wootton PC: The previous set of figures showed NOX levels were near to the limits at that time. How was this reduction in December achieved?

MT: We dose more ammonia to the system but need to be careful with the amount used; it's a balancing act.

PM: ... it's like adding *AdBlue* to a diesel car, to reduce NOX emissions.

Wootton PC: Re: dust emissions, does this apply to particles of less than 2.5?

MT: Will confirm this.

### Operational Update

MT: The plant performed very strongly in Q4, with very good availability across the 3 boilers and the gas turbine. RSL processed c 159,000 tonnes of waste. There was just a short period of down time in October with one of the boilers. There was an internal steam leak which needed repairing. In November, on line 2, there was a bearing on one of the fans, which needed a short shutdown to repair.

### Environmental:

MT: Q4 slide shows a 30-minute exceedance breach of S02 on line 3 in December. S02 is controlled by adding hydrated lime to the system, which neutralises the acidity. The exceedance was due to contaminated waste. A pipe was temporarily blocked and unable to control for 30 mins, but it unblocked shortly thereafter. No further issues reported.

Marston Moretaine PP: An incident with S02 was also reported on 7<sup>th</sup> Nov.

MT: Peaks and troughs throughout the day are quite common, but in this case the daily limit was not exceeded & there is no need to report this. However, a 30-minute exceedance is much greater than this; hence it was reported.

SC: On a scale of seriousness, how significant is a Schedule 5 breach? Is RSL required to report any breach; if so, how serious does the breach have to be?

PM: Any breach, small or large, needs to be reported. In this case, a very small breach, but still had to notify the EA.

SC: Also noted a number of 'public complaints' – what type of complaints?

PM: 20/1, a report of a smoky odour; investigated, but none detected from the plant. Also in May, a report of burning rubber odour & again, not detected from RSL. June/July – a question re the issue of flies last summer (related to the summer shutdown).

#### 4. General Manager's Update (PM) – (see slides)

##### Section 106 compliance

The GM confirmed the available funds for the Community Trust Fund in 2024 will be approximately £81k which would be distributed in two tranches by Grantscape the same as in previous years and that they will shortly be contacting registered household with to apply for this year's Electricity Subsidy Scheme.

The GM confirmed that the works on the Rookery North circular path were complete.

The GM described the site vehicle movement restrictions as detailed in the Development Consent Order (planning permission) in relation to the Environmental Permit variation application that had been submitted. There is a restriction of no more than 594 vehicle movements per day to site. The current average number of movements is approx. 330 per day with the largest ever number being 412, significantly below the permitted limit. The GM confirmed that vehicle movements would not exceed the permitted limit should the permit variation be approved by the EA. There are no plans to seek to increase the vehicle movement numbers in relation to the permit variation. Rookery South report the vehicle movement numbers to Central Bedfordshire twice a year. There is no understanding of when the Environmental Permit variation will be determined by the Environment Agency.

##### Visitor Centre

In 2023 there were 40 visits of 483 visitors including Bedford Modern School Year 6 students.

##### Green Lane

It was confirmed that RSL will pay the contractor (Warners) directly for a monthly litter pick of Green Lane for 2024. There was some discussion on how to stop the casual littering of Green Lane.

##### New postcode

Rookery South has a new postcode - **MK43 9TN** - which in time will take pressure away from the homes and businesses.

##### Employment Opportunities

There is a strong settled team at Rookery with no local employment opportunities at present. This can change so please do keep looking at the website if this changes.

#### 5. Vital Energi – Jonathan Burley (JB) – see slides for VI.

JB introduced background to project and included examples from Clyde, Manchester and Leeds. *Vital Energi* very keen on education, providing teaching & learning materials for all Key Stages. Also stressed the importance of promoting local employment opportunities including apprenticeships.

Re. Rookery South Network, the project will be built and operated by VE and will consist of 3 elements – the primary heat source, using heat energy derived from RSL

steam take-off. There will also be a new Energy Centre that will support the network if there are any shutdowns. The third element will be the network of underground pipes, which will run from the Energy Centre to customers.

In terms of the commercialisation phase, this is now at the final stages of the planning application (see details on slide) and hope to submit this in Q1 this year. JB indicated the site of the Energy Centre, which will be in the grassed area in front of the plant.

There will be 3 phases in the construction of the Energy Centre, in order to manage capital expenditure and will build up heat capacity as the number of customers increases. E.g Phase 1 would take 8 MW of heat from RSL; Phase 2 – introduction of 2 X 4MW gas boilers; Phase 3 – construction completed with the addition of another 40 MW of gas boilers and a flue. The chimney will be 48m high and will be clad in the same “terracotta” and “anthracite” colours as RSL.

The Energy Centre will contain a Thermal Store to store extra energy, and which can be charged up in a period of low demand. When there is high demand, this can then be released. The building itself will be 11m high.

JB indicated the pipe network, which passes through Millbrook (see slide for route). He advised that there would be a lot of digging involved in the laying of this, and that a traffic plan has been drafted, relating to closure of Station Lane and Sandhill [sic] Close. It's likely that the road will be closed – in sections - for 5-6 months, although residents would have access. See slide for timeline for the project.

SC: This will need careful consideration, especially re Sandhill Road, and recommended that Vital Energi attend a Millbrook PC meeting.

Wootton PC: Does the planning application relate to the total construction, up to 40 MW – subject to commercial considerations?

JB: Confirmed this, noting likely future housing developments in the area.

Brogborough PC: How much surplus energy can be obtained from this plant to go into the network?

JB estimated around 30 MW maximum.

Brogborough PC: 46 MW to meet peak demand? Is the energy produced carbon neutral?

JB: It will be low carbon. Natural gas is the most cost-efficient method of doing this right now. However, this is a long-term project and costs may change and this may allow VE to bring Electricity resilience to the site.

## **EA Update**

BF read the email update from Ed'A and will circulate this to the CLP.

## **LA Update –**

BF: DW unable to attend the meeting, as on sick leave.

AT: The last monitoring took place at the end of November 2023 and no issues were reported. There is some outstanding bi-annual reporting to be submitted regarding traffic plans.

Rail Update – SS: The Marston Vale rail service will be resuming [in January], providing 17 trains a day, 6 days a week.

## **6. Environment Agency Update**

Emma D'Avilar sent an apology and update: see forwarded email.

BF: to contact EA and also Bryn Walters to remind the EA of its commitment to attend CLP meetings a year.

## **7. Local Authority Update (Central Bedfordshire)**

Unfortunately, Dee Walker is away on sick leave until February.

## **8. AOB**

Marston Moretaine: When will the next RSL data appear on the website, as it still shows November?

PM: It will be within a couple of weeks.

Carbon Capture – AT: The Encyclis Sustainability Review is on the website and includes an agenda to decarbonise the business. The company is setting up a low carbon development team to focus on this. The plans include carbon capture and is keen on this, although there is not much to report at this stage. The Protos plant in Cheshire currently has track 1 funding to explore this, but DESNZ is only considering funding those plants which are pipeline ready.

RSL also looking at using HVO (Hydro-treated Vegetable Oil), which produces much less CO<sub>2</sub>. This option may have some traction and could be an alternative to using diesel for starting up again following shutdown. Aiming towards more than 90% decarbonisation, but there needs to be a technical feasibility study first – once converted to HVO, it cannot be immediately changed back.

## **9. Next Meeting** Proposed date Monday 15<sup>th</sup> **July 2024** @ 6pm