Key issues

Key concerns for the local community included traffic and transport effects during the operation of the installation as daily delivery of refused derived fuel and the removal of ash would add around 60 HGV trips to an already heavily congested local road network.

A proposed new bypass will provide a route for HGV traffic that will have greatly reduced effects on the road network. However the timing of the construction of that bypass is uncertain and this needed to be reflected in establishing the baseline for the assessment.

The desire to hit the suggested deadline for the next Contracts for Difference auction meant that the EIA had to be undertaken within a tight timeline leading to a bespoke, informal Scoping process and the need for effective, continuous liaison with the Local Waste Authority; Derbyshire County Council.

Purpose of the project

The project was being developed by Future Earth Energy Limited to bring forward an Energy from Waste plant that will generate 15MW of electricity and also be ready to export heat to future neighbouring businesses.

The plant will use gasification technology and process Refuse Derived Fuel derived from the post recycling elements of commercial and industrial waste.

Description of the project

The Drakelow Renewable Energy Centre is located on the derelict site of the former Drakelow C Power Station south of Burton on Trent, Derbyshire.

It consists of an Energy from Waste facility utilising gasification technology to produce a Synthetic Gas to generate steam that will drive a steam turbine. The installation will be fully enclosed within a bespoke steel portal frame building and will include an education facility.
Lessons learnt

Agreeing the correct determining authority at the outset was required as both the LPA and Local Waste Authority were keen to determine the application. Confirming the feedstock was key and as it was established that this would be RDF it was clear that the decision should sit with the Local Waste Authority; Derbyshire County Council.

Early consultation with the consenting authority provided much valuable input into the EIA and design process. This included the importance of high quality design that set the standard to influence future nearby commercial and industrial development.

The existence of a community liaison group relating to the adjacent Drakelow Park mixed use development enabled quick and effective community consultation. Engagement with the local community occurred after much of the initial feasibility work (i.e. understanding the feedstock type, volume and likely sources) had been done so that the project team could provide answers to the key questions.

An informal Scoping process with direct consultation with stakeholders, including the local communities, was undertaken which allowed focussed, proportionate scope to be agreed.

Contact details

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Lessons learnt cont.

There will always be overlaps between the EIA and environmental permitting processes and the EIA coordinator must understand both processes and the opportunities to minimise abortive works as far as possible between the two. Detailed consultation with the Environment Agency at an early stage is required.

The EIA was undertaken based on Front End Engineering Design (FEED). It was important throughout to recognise the uncertainty around the final design and to undertake assessment based on a worst case design envelope. For example air quality assessment was based on achieving maximum emissions levels in accordance with the Industrial Emissions Directive and design of the stack allowed for headroom in concentration levels at sensitive receptors.

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