

Sharon Hodgson MP
Member of Parliament for Washington and
Sunderland West
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Our ref: MPNE309
Your ref: AGH
Date: 20 November 2017

Dear Mrs Hodgson

Thank you for your letter of 1 November regarding the proposed gasification plant in Washington. I am aware that Sunderland Council are responding to you directly on this issue, therefore we have provided information regarding our processes.

Permit

Rolton Kilbride will need to apply for an environmental permit from us to authorise this plant. We consider that this site would fall under the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2016 and as such, we would be responsible for regulating the site.

When we receive an application for an environmental permit we undertake a thorough assessment of the information to determine whether the applicant has demonstrated that they can meet the appropriate technical and regulatory requirements that are relevant to those operations. A permit would only be issued if those requirements are met.

We will also need to assess whether it is of 'high public interest'. If we determine that it is then we will carry out a public consultation. This consultation would only concentrate on issues linked to our permitting process and is separate to any planning considerations. We will be responding to the planning consultation advising that regulation of the site falls to us.

Regulatory role

Please be assured that we take our regulatory role very seriously and monitor a site throughout its lifetime, and not just once the permit has been issued. The regulation of permitted sites continues through a series of planned inspections and audits of the systems in place to meet the conditions of the permit. Additionally, we require the operator to provide monitoring information to us to ensure compliance with permit conditions relating to emissions from the operation. This regulatory activity would be the responsibility of our local officers who inspect and audit permitted sites such as the one proposed.

In regards to your concerns about air pollution, the site will be controlled by the Industrial Emissions Directive which sets out strict limits to safeguard human health and the environment. We would regulate the site against these controls to measure the site's

compliance. If the site were found to be non-compliant with permit conditions we have a range of enforcement measures that would be available, depending on the circumstances. These tools range from providing advice and guidance to the operator for relatively minor problems, using Enforcement Notices for more serious problems to ensure the operator returns to compliance, and potentially prosecution. Ultimately, we may suspend or revoke an operator's permit if the circumstances are justified under our Enforcement and Sanctions policy.

Impact on habitat

As part of pre-application discussions and during the application process, we will require information to assess the potential impacts on nature, landscape and heritage conservation sites and species. Potential impacts and measures to prevent or mitigate any risks are also considered during the application determination process.

As we have not yet received the permit application, we are unable to provide detailed information about how we would regulate the site. However, once we have received this application it will be available as a public register document and available for the public to view at request.

I hope this information allows you to provide an appropriate level of response to your constituents but if you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jamie Fletcher', written in a cursive style.

Jamie Fletcher
Area Environment Manager - Regulated Industry