



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Sharon Hodgson MP  
Suite 1 and 1A,  
Vermont House,  
Concord, Washington,  
Tyne & Wear NE37 2SQ  
Tel. (0191) 417 2000  
hodgsons@parliament.uk

Mr Andrew Needham  
Managing Director  
Rolton Kilbride Limited  
The Charles Parker Building  
Midland Road, Higham Ferrers  
Northants NN10 8DN

By post and by email

Our Ref: AGH

### **Rolton Kilbride Gasification Plant – Planning Application**

27 July 2018

Dear Mr Needham,

I write to thank you for taking the time to meet with me and some of my constituents on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2018. At the end of the meeting, it was agreed that I would write to you to seek some further answers. I have outlined some questions below and would appreciate if you could address each of them.

#### **Technology**

During the meeting, it was established that the type of gasification technology that would be used at the plant was not yet decided. Has a decision on the type of gasification technology now been made? If so, please will you inform me of the type of technology that will be used, including bottom ash collection and disposal arrangements? If you're unable to inform me of the type of gasification technology that will be used at present, due to commercial reasons or due to the tender process, please will you tell me when you expect to be able to make this kind of announcement?

Please will you elaborate on how this technology is currently used internationally, and most importantly, more locally in Europe. During the meeting you cited Japan, but Japan have different environmental legislation to legislation in Europe. Could you therefore please explain how the technology will abide by existing UK and EU environmental legislation?

Some of my constituents expressed concerns during the meeting about the lack of information on the technology that will be used at the plant. As I am sure you can appreciate, they do not want to feel as though they are guinea pigs for a new type of technology being used for the first time in Europe.

#### **Waste**

The nature of the waste that will be incinerated is still of concern to my constituents and I. Please can you state where the waste will come from that will be incinerated at the site? Please can you state the nature of the waste that will be consumed at the plant? And what checks and balances will be in place to monitor the waste at the source? How will you ensure that contaminated waste isn't going into the plant?





## **Health implications**

My constituents and I remain concerned about the health and safety implications to local residents because of the plant. During the meeting, you were asked who will be responsible for any illnesses as a result of the plant. I would appreciate if you could please answer this question in writing. During the meeting, the example of asbestos was used numerous times. I am sure you can appreciate why my constituents are so concerned about the health implications of the plant, especially considering the impact asbestos has had on the health and wellbeing of many of their friends and family members locally over the years.

## **Air quality**

This leads to my next point of air quality. Currently, there are no air quality tests taking place near the site so it won't be possible to know if the plant has any effect on the air quality. This is very concerning to my constituents and I, as I believe they have a right to know about air quality.

During the meeting, the point was raised that if car manufactures are unable to solve the problem of filtering particles from vehicles, which have caused health issues, what proven methods will you be taking to resolve this issue satisfactorily? Additionally, how often would the proposed plant be checked on an official basis for the composition of its emissions and by whom?

I understand that Rolton Kilbride have received a report titled "Sunderland City Council, Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Assessment Peer Review, Proposed Renewable Energy Centre, Land at Hillthorn Farm, Washington" dated May 2018. Has Rolton Kilbride responded to the questions that the report raises yet? If not, do you intend to, and if so, when? Please will you copy me into your response?

## **Wetland Park**

Gill Pipes, from Washington Wetland Centre, said during the meeting that she was disappointed that no one from Rolton Kilbride had approached her to discuss the impact the plant could have on the local wildlife in the Centre, and informed you that the details in the original planning document, where the Centre is referenced, that the information is two decades old. Have you made any contact with Gill since the meeting? Will you be working with Gill to understand her concerns about the surrounding wildlife, and updating the information in the planning document?

## **Application**

The Environment Agency kindly provided a presentation during the meeting. However, the key point of their presentation was that they have not yet received a permit application from Rolton Kilbride for this specific plant. Please can you inform me when you expect to submit this application to the Environment Agency?

## **Responsibility**

The running of a plant such as this will carry a significant amount of responsibility, especially if anything goes wrong. I therefore ask, who will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the plant? Who will be responsible for ensuring that toxic waste does not enter the plant? Who will be responsible for ensuring that the plant has adequate fire prevention facilities and equipment?



### **Role of Rolton Kilbride**

Rolton Kilbride have been the public facing company so far, but my constituents and I are keen to know whether Rolton Kilbride will operate the plant? If this function is to be outsourced, please can you inform me of the expertise of the operator? If the plant were to be outsourced, would the persons operating the plant be directly employed or sub-contracted? Will Rolton Kilbride play any function if the plant were up and running, if so what function would Rolton Kilbride play?

I would appreciate if you could address these concerns. Please note that I will be sharing this letter and your response with my constituents.

Yours sincerely,

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson MP**

Member of Parliament for Washington & Sunderland West Constituency

Covering the Castle, Redhill and St Anne's Wards of Sunderland, and the Washington Central, East, North, South and West Wards.

CC by email - Mr Iain Fairlamb, Head of Planning and Regeneration  
Mr Patrick Melia, Chief Executive of Sunderland City Council  
Mr Oliver Harman, Area Director – Environment Agency  
Mr Jamie Fletcher, Local Area Manager – Environment Agency  
Liz Waugh, Coast Communications - On behalf of Rolton Kilbride  
Cllr Graeme Miller, Leader of Sunderland City Council  
Cllr Alex Scullion, Chair of the Local Planning Committee