



COMMUNITY BRIEFING

HAZARDOUS WASTE DISPOSAL AT PURTON

The Hills Group has initiated a community liaison committee for its various waste and recycling activities at Purton. Represented on the committee are Purton Parish Council, Wiltshire County Council, North Wiltshire District Council, Braydon Parish Meeting and Ps & Qs.

At its first meeting, the committee discussed Hills' plans to develop the part of the site known as Parkgate Farm for hazardous waste disposal. It was agreed that it would be helpful for the company to produce this briefing sheet so that a summary of the information could be made available to the wider community.

BACKGROUND

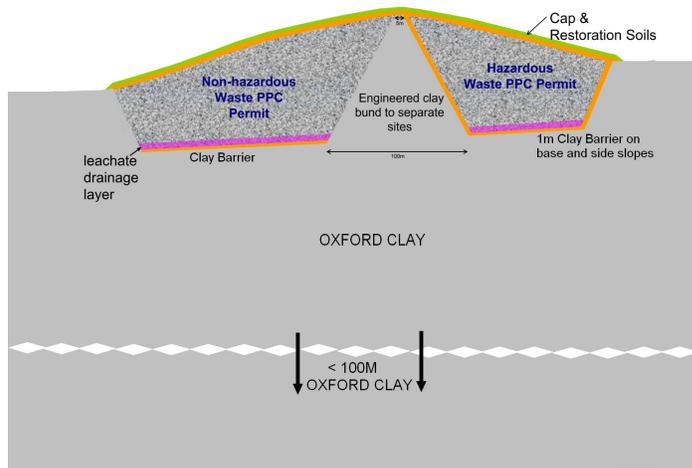
Hills was granted permission to extend its non-hazardous landfill operation onto land at Parkgate Farm in 1995. While no disposal has yet taken place, the company has built an access bridge over the railway from the existing site and undertaken new planting to provide screening. The current proposals seek to use part of the Parkgate Farm site for hazardous waste disposal – an operation currently handled on the existing site, which is nearing capacity. It is estimated that the new site would be operational for a total of 18 years, with the non-hazardous landfill operating in parallel for the final nine years. Oxford clay, itself a valuable mineral, is extracted prior to the landfilling. The clay, because of its impermeability and stability, has a number of high specification engineering uses and is currently being used in the construction of the A419 Commonhead junction improvement at Swindon.

WHY HERE?

There is a critical need for hazardous waste disposal facilities in the UK. The number of permitted sites has reduced from over 200 to less than 10 following changes in regulations. The regulations also re-classified some waste previously not considered as

hazardous, as hazardous, so the amount to be managed has risen over the same period. While facilities are being developed that can recycle such wastes or remove the hazardous element, landfill remains the best practical environmental option for the time being for many wastes.

The great advantage of the site is that it is located on a deep deposit of highly impermeable Oxford clay some 100 metres deep. This band of clay only occurs in



isolated areas across England but makes for one of the best geological settings for all types of landfill. Landfill takes place in only the top ten metres. Rigorous testing has proved the impermeable nature of the clay which prevents any liquid within it from reaching ground water. Leachate generated by the waste can then be collected and

pumped away for treatment. As each phase of the landfill is completed, a minimum of a one-metre layer of engineered clay is used to cap the site, so creating a total seal. Soils are replaced above this and the site returned to agriculture.

WHAT ARE HAZARDOUS WASTES?

Hazardous waste is a broad term for a wide range of substances that present different levels of risk. Those which present the highest risk - for example, because they are highly flammable or have the potential to be infectious - are not landfilled but are usually incinerated, often at the place they are produced. Liquid wastes are also not landfilled. Others, such as fluorescent tubes or cathode ray tubes in televisions, pose little immediate threat but may cause long term damage over a period of time.

WASTES WE WOULD HANDLE

Soils - the greatest volume of waste handled by the site would consist of contaminated soils. Throughout the UK, there are thousands of sites that have been contaminated by previous use. Often, this is associated with industrial processes or activities that have

now ceased, but where waste products or remaining residues present a hazard to the general environment. There is increasing pressure to re-use contaminated land rather than develop greenfield sites. Contamination may have been caused by oil spills or by metals from previous industrial use.

Filter cakes and sludges – a number of industrial processes leave filter cakes and sludges that may be contaminated with metals. The Royal Mint, for example, has to dispose of moulds in which our coins are made. The chemical industry produces filter cakes when it neutralizes acids and alkalis.

Other hazardous waste products with which we are all familiar include televisions, refrigerators, personal computers, crushed (and empty) paint and aerosol cans and crushed oil filters from our cars.

WASTES WE WOULD NOT HANDLE

Wastes not covered by our permit include:

- Liquid waste
- Anything likely to be explosive
- Anything radioactive
- Anything corrosive(eg strong acids / alkalis)
- Anything inflammable
- Unidentifiable chemicals
- Tyres
- Anything which reacts violently with the air
- Anything which has a strong smell.
- Any biodegradable or infectious waste
- Anything which is too dusty (fuel ash must be bagged).

ACCEPTANCE PROCEDURES

Acceptance of hazardous waste for landfill must follow rigorous procedures set out by the Environment Agency. Failure to comply could result in the site's Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) permit being withdrawn. The key acceptance stages are as follows:

Profiling – The Landfill Regulations introduced the Waste Acceptance Criteria, which clearly set out the responsibilities of waste producers to identify all the characteristics of

their wastes and also provides guidance to waste management companies on how to determine if waste is acceptable for their facility.

Unlike other waste types, hazardous waste cannot simply be brought to a landfill for disposal. The analysis of the wastes must first be provided by the producer. Should there be any doubt, Hills seeks the Environment Agency's agreement on acceptance. If it agrees to accept the waste, it is booked into the site for delivery at specified times.

Documentation – It is a legal requirement that, whenever any sort of waste (including hazardous waste) is moved, it is accompanied by documentation which confirms its nature and also source, haulier and destination. All hazardous waste producers must previously have registered with the Environment Agency and obtained a unique premises code which is used to track waste movements. This ensures that every load of hazardous waste can be tracked back to its source. The landfill operator must submit detailed quarterly records to the Environment Agency.

On-site checks – If the waste fulfils all the necessary criteria, it can be transported to the landfill. On arrival, samples may be taken and sent for independent analysis to confirm the producer's original profile. Visual checks are also then made upon tipping to ensure that the characteristics described in the original enquiry are maintained. Hills maintains the right to refuse to accept any waste which it believes does not meet its waste acceptance criteria.

MORE INFORMATION?

If you would like further information please go to the community section of the Hills website www.hills-group.co.uk where you can view the full minutes of liaison meetings and contact us by email. Or write to Monique Hayes, Communications Officer, The Hills Group, Ailesbury Court, High Street, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 1AA