ARROW 15
Your ref WS010003 Whitemoss Hazardous Waste Site
ARROW ref 10024954
(Nicola Escott ref 10024302)
Points made at the Open Floor Hearing July 2014

THE PROPOSED EXTENSION TO WHITEMOSS HAZARDOUS WASTE SITE WOULD UNDERMINE SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVES TO HAZARDOUS WASTE LANDFILLING

I agree with the comments made by Roger Clayton from Lathom South Parish Council who said, "*The problem is not where will the waste go if we don't have the Whitemoss extension? It won't end up in 3rd world countries. The problem is how will the company fill it? The site might never close if the extension is granted*."

I am concerned that having an over provision of hazardous waste landfill capacity of the magnitude proposed by Whitemoss Ltd would financially undercut more sustainable methods of dealing with hazardous waste. This would particularly be the case for contaminated soil which is a large proportion of the waste landfilled at Whitemoss.

The Lancashire Minerals and Waste hearings demonstrated that there is a massive over capacity of hazardous waste landfill in the North West region. There are already 5 million cubic metres of unused space (1) and the other sites can take all the categories of waste that Whitemoss does (2).

Other hazardous waste sites in the North West do not have the problems that Whitemoss has of being a highly unsuitable, unstable location with a high water table level.

It is cheaper (but very short sighted) to dig and dump contaminated soil than it is to treat it on site using biological methods. For example fungi can be used to clean up contaminated soils on site (3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10). Thermal desorption is another technique that uses heat to enable

contaminants to be removed or separated from soil or sludge (10 para 3.1). This is not incineration.

Whitemoss say they use biological methods of treating waste on site, but what goes on there appears to be a token or partial effort. It can take a long time to complete biological processes. If they are done properly the result is usually that no waste needs landfilling at all.

Overprovision of hazardous waste landfill helps to make landfill the least expensive option

Often contaminated land lies derelict and unused for long periods of time during which time on-site treatments using biological methods could be used. By allowing a massive overprovision of hazardous waste landfill capacity, the planning system seems to make it financially advantageous not to go down the route of taking the time to use biological methods to their full extent.

What seems to happen is that landowners and developers, instead of treating the land while it is dormant, remove the contaminated soil shortly before construction and send it to landfill.

Hazardous waste landfilling survives because it is cheaper than the more sustainable alternatives. It doesn't reliably cover the full cost of damage to the environment from disposal and this is one of the reasons why landfill manages to remain less expensive than more sustainable alternatives.

Hazardous material from televisions and computer monitors is landfilled unnecessarily at Whitemoss. A company called Nulife Glass Processing, in Irlam, Manchester has developed technology for recycling the cathode ray tubes from TVs and old style computer screens that are landfilled at Whitemoss. As well as separating the lead from the glass the process extracts the phosphor and results in clean materials that can be reused in industrial processes.

Simon Greer, of Nulife Ltd said: *“The process has no emissions, creates no waste and avoids export of hazardous material around the globe.”*

Whitemoss Landfill say that they are part of the recycling system and that they take waste from Nulife when their operation breaks down.

However, this does not mean that it is essential to landfill recyclable material as it could be stored and then recycled. My point is that most of the waste that goes to Whitemoss does not need landfilling, or incinerating. There are more sustainable alternatives that are being undercut by market forces because the planning system is allowing far too much landfill.

Communities like ours bear the cost of overprovision of landfill.

Local health professionals have commented on the effects of pollution from 13 landfill sites surrounding Skelmersdale

On page 2 of the report labelled ARROW 3 there is a hand-drawn map of the 13 landfill sites surrounding the town. Most of these are filled and closed. In the report ARROW 3 we explain that when a site closes this is not the end of the problem for local communities.

The continuing pollution associated with closed sites is something we have experienced first-hand. Some health professionals are aware of the pockets of extreme sickness in streets downwind of the landfill sites but are not willing to make any public statements for fear of losing their jobs. They have been very encouraging to ARROW saying, *"Carry on you are on the right track."* This concern is backed up by scientific studies looking at the general long term effects of landfill as outlined in ARROW 2.

A community worn down by 8 extensions to Whitemoss Planning Permissions

Our community has been let down by the planning system time and again. There have been 8 successive extensions of the original planning permission granted in 1977 ref 08/77/76.

1) 1985 ref 08/85/527
2) 1994 ref 08/94/208
3) 1996 ref 08/96/993 variation in conditions allowing special waste

4) 2000 ref 08/02/1283
5) 2002 ref 08/02/1218
6) 2006 ref 08/06/0918
7) 2009 ref 08/09/0148 allowing activity to 2013
8) 2011 ref 08/11/01713 allowing activity until 2018

In 1987 a condition was imposed that “in the interest of local amenities” the site should be completed by 1995!

It would appear that there was no proper publicly scrutinised Environmental Statement in 1996 as to whether the Whitemoss site was suitable for taking hazardous waste because the change was made as a variation to planning conditions.

These planning extensions have created disillusionment with the planning system. We thought that at last common sense had prevailed when Lancashire County Council decided to remove Whitemoss from its Waste Plan in 2012. I hope you can understand why people feel that the planning system has failed them and that you can do something to rectify this.

References:

1) ARROW 1 para 32

2) ARROW 1 paras 39 - 41

3) Tigini, V., et al., *Isolation and characterisation of polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) degrading fungi from a historically contaminated soil.* Microbial Cell Factories, 2009. 8(1): p. 5.

4) Zhao, Y., et al., *Biodegradation Kinetics of DDT in Soil under Different Environmental Conditions by Laccase Extract from White Rot Fungi.* Chinese Journal of Chemical Engineering, 2010. 18(3): p. 486-492.

5) Pieper, D. and W. Reineke, *Engineering bacteria for bioremediation.* Current Opinion in Biotechnology, 2000. 11(3): p. 262-270.

6) Teresa J. Cutright & Sunggyu Lee, *In Situ Soil Remediation: Bacteria or Fungi?* Published in Energy Sources, Part A: Recovery, Utilization, and Environmental Effects, Volume 17, Issue 4 July 1995 , pages 413 - 419

7) Paul Stamets, 10/1/2005 ‘Mycelium Running -how mushrooms can save the world’. Publisher: Ten Speed Press. Contains information about how White rot fungi degrades Lindane and benzo[*a*]-pyrene and can oxidize highly chlorinated chemicals**.**

8) Cutright, T., & Erdem, Z., Overview of the bioremediation and the degradation pathways of DDT, Journal of Adnan Menderes University Agricultural faculty 2012; 9(2) : 39 - 45

[9] Gomes, Helena I, Celia Dias-Ferreira, and Alexandra B Ribeiro. 2013. Overview of in situ and ex situ remediation technologies for pcb-contaminated soils and sediments and obstacles for full-scale application. Sci Total Environ 445–446 (0): 237-260. http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969712015318.

[10] Zhu, Lizhong, Li Lu, and Dong Zhang. 2010. Mitigation and remediation technologies for organic contaminated soils. Frontiers of Environmental Science & Engineering in China 4 (4): 373-386.