Dunbar Landfill Community Liaison Group meeting minutes – Dunbar Town House
Wednesday 31st January 2024, 19.00

Attendees:

Cllr Lyn Jardine – East Lothian Council
Cllr Donna Collins – East Lothian Council
Pippa Swan – Dunbar Community Council
Alasdair Swan – Dunbar Community Council
Pam Shields – Dunbar Community Council
Rev. David Mumford - East Lammermuir Community Council
Jacquie Bell – Chair Dunbar and East Linton Area Partnership
Alison Crowhurst – St Annes Eco Group
Sharon Morgan – St Anna Eco Group
Philip Immirzi – Dunbar Resident
Ian Hamilton – Dunbar Resident
Paul Ringham – Valencia
Andrew Turner – Camarco, supporting Valencia

Item		Action
1.0	**Introductions & Apologies**	
1.1	Members were welcomed to the CLG meeting at the Dunbar Town House, delegates were invited to introduce themselves. It was noted there were a number of apologies: • Paul McLennan MSP • Martin Whitfield MSP • Craig Hoy MSP • Kenny MacAskill MP • Sanchita Patjoshi – Dunbar Community Council It was noted that some residents may not have received a formal invite to the Community Liaison Group (CLG). Valencia confirmed that all members would be welcomed to attend and encouraged those in attendance to recommend members to join the email distribution list.	
1.2	Jacquie Bell commented that there was a perception within the local community that the communications around the landfill site were still not at the level expected. Paul Ringham responded that Valencia did not feel every detail of site operations would need to be shared with the community. Cllr Jardine suggested that significant updates at the site should be communicated. It was agreed once the site was due to reopen the CLG would be informed.	**PR**
2.0	**Update to Landfill fire**	
2.1	Paul Ringham delivered an update on the landfill fire incident following the last CLG meeting, before answering pre-submitted questions, along with those asked during the meeting. Valencia had submitted its investigation report to the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) as the site's regulator, and conducted follow up clarifications. It was	

	confirmed that SEPA would be unlikely, in Valencia's experience, to issue their own investigation report. Paul noted that Valencia did not publish site investigation reports publicly. Paul confirmed that Valencia had experienced two landfill fires attributable to lithium ion products in 2023, and welcomed the recent announcement from UK Government to implement a ban on single use vaping products containing lithium ion batteries. It was expected that in the coming years this would greatly reduce the volume delivered to waste sites.	
2.2	It was explained that as part of the investigation Valencia had taken the decision to make a significant investment in a sortation facility at the Dunbar site, along with its other landfills to inspect incoming waste and enable Valencia to remove any non-conforming wastes and recyclable materials. Once this facility had received its environmental permit the landfill site would be reopened to waste deliveries. Valencia had also conducted a three phased approach to managing this risk in the future including the investment in an sortation facility, but also writing to all customers reminding them of their obligations to send conforming waste and conducting audits of waste deliveries. Paul explained that the landfill site's environmental permit contained a list of permittable wastes – this would be shared with the CLG.	**PR**
	Paul explained that inert restoration soils continued to be delivered to the site. Jacquie commented that at a recent Viridor CLG meeting there was confusion over the operational status of the site. Philip Immirzi also noted that SEPA did not seem to be aware. Paul confirmed that Valencia had communicated this with the environmental regulator. Alasdair Swan asked for further clarification of the activities that would be undertaken at the sortation facility. Paul explained this would be a facility to sort incoming wastes, removing any recyclable materials and non-conforming waste.	
2.3	Cllr Jardine sought to understand what actions the waste industry were taking to combat and communicate this issue. It was confirmed that the Environmental Services Association had a dedicated working group focused on managing lithium ion batteries within waste. There was also a communications campaign, a link to this was included in the minutes – here - https://www.letsrecycle.com/news/esa-relaunches-public-battery-fires-campaign/. Cllr Collins noted the significant temperatures involved with lithium ion battery fires.	
2.4	Pam Shields asked what reviews or enhancements to the site's emergency protocols had been made following the incident. It was confirmed that Valencia had undertaken staff training and increased the volume of soil material onsite. Enhanced communications with the CLG email distribution list would share updates from the site. Cllr Collins noted many residents did not have access to emails. It was agreed Valencia would work closely with East Lothian Council to communicate issues at the site with residents.	
2.5	There were comments relating to the long term health impacts to the soil and human health following the incident. Paul noted that SEPA would be responsible for monitoring environmental health, and the health authorities led on human health monitoring. Paul confirmed that Valencia were unable to comment on SEPA or East Lothian's role in conducting air quality monitoring around the incident.	

3.0	**Operations update**	
	Paul answered a combination of pre-submitted questions, along with those asked at the meeting. These were grouped in themes for the minutes.	
3.1	**Site management – wind conditions** Paul was questioned on the circumstances when the site would close to waste deliveries. It was explained that this was a management decision during high wind events. Should this occur Valencia would cover over the exposed waste with soil, and contact waste deliveries to be diverted to appropriate licenced facilities. Any waste material already onsite or arriving would be stored. The new sortation facility would have capacity to store c. 15 lorry loads. Jacquie commented that during the Royal opening of the ERF there was visible dust blowing around the site. Litter picking and wind nets would be deployed in the event of high wind events.	
3.2	**Odour** There was a discussion around the appropriate route to communicate odour complaints. Paul encouraged members of the community to continue reporting complaints of odour to SEPA, and East Lothian Council, but also asked Valencia could also be copied into emails to support with Valencia's own investigation. With residents able to email enquiries@valencia.co.uk putting 'Dunbar' in the subject line of the email. Paul explained that the waste cells were covered on a daily basis during operations. A comment was made that in the past this cover may have been minimal. Cllr Collins and Rev. Mumford confirmed that there had been a thick sulphur smell in recent weeks. Paul noted that Valencia's management protocol was to capture and burn landfill gas as a revenue stream. It was also noted that within the surrounding community other industrial operators and occasional organic matter washed up on the local beaches contributed to odours in the community.	
3.3	**Vermin** A question was submitted seeking to understand more about Valencia's vermin control protocols. Paul explained that Valencia's operations were regulated by the environmental permit for the site, as part of these operating conditions the site must be kept tidy, any potential sources of vermin must be managed. Valencia would welcome any updates from the community and will investigate any reports. Any management of vermin populations will be undertaken by appropriate licenced contractors. During a discussion it was noted that in the past hawks and cat speying activity was undertaken. In previous years there had been a rodent issue on the site boundary. It was explained that changing waste management practices, including the reduction of food waste being landfilled was also contributing to reducing vermin numbers at landfill sites. Cllr Collins explained that there were local businesses who kept hawks for vermin control purposes. Paul thanked the member and it was agreed an introduction would be made.	**DC**

3.4	**Litter management** Paul outlined that litter picking was a standard part of the sites management activity. It was noted that in the past there was a perception that litter picking was not continually in operation. Philip and Jacquie commented that there was litter in the surrounding hedgerows and beach including springs as far as Skateraw and Barns Ness SSSIs. There were also bags of litter lying for many months onsite that had been reported to SEPA. Paul confirmed that he was not aware of any obligation to conduct litter picking on Whitesand beach but would investigate this and revert at the next meeting with an update.	**PR**
3.5	**Deliveries to site** Paul explained that in previous months, the site was receiving a greatly reduced volume of deliveries, the loads being delivered were restoration soils that were sourced from construction sites in the region and would be used to cap and restore the site. Paul confirmed that the majority of the waste being delivered to the site was regionally sourced from waste management operations, and the cost of haulage would be a limiting factor for waste originating greater distances away from the site. The community noted that there had been a visual increase in the number of deliveries being made to the Dunbar site. This had also led to concern that lorries carrying waste were parking up in the local villages overnight, with drivers not having access to appropriate facilities. Paul confirmed that whilst Valencia was not responsible for the haulage of waste to the Dunbar site, regular communications were made to customers informing them that it would not be appropriate to drive and park up overnight in the local villages. It was agreed that should residents feel lorries were parking inappropriately, they could report this to Valencia noting the registration plate and date of the incident. This could be email to enquiries@valencia.co.uk and Valencia would clarify whether this vehicle was delivering to the landfill site. Putting 'Dunbar' in the subject line of the email. It was noted that the ERF located next to the landfill site, shared an access road and did accept similar waste types.	
3.6	**Site restoration and aftercare** There was a discussion around the restoration of the landfill site, including a number of pre-submitted questions. Paul explained that Valencia had submitted the final contours of the landfill site to East Lothian Council, and that this notification was shared with the CLG email group. The landfill site will be capped once the waste profiles align with the approved contours contained within the planning permission. The site was due to close to active waste in 2025. The site would be restored with a mix of grassland planting. This process would take c. 24 months upon closure with Valencia continuing to manage the site.	

	Paul agreed to clarify whether there would be public access to the site in the medium-long term. At a future meeting Paul confirmed that Valencia would welcome a delegation of the CLG for a site visit to understand more about site operations. Paul explained that following closure of the site Valencia would be obliged to monitor the landfill gas and leachate production in accordance with the sites environmental permit.	
4.0	**Community issues**	
4.1	A question was submitted relating to community funding available for projects in the area surrounding the Dunbar site. Paul confirmed that the Valencia Communities Fund had replaced a scheme supported by Viridor to distribute landfill tax credits. This was an independent charity, and a link would be inserted into the minutes. Link to the Valencia Communities Fund website: www.valenciacommunitiesfund.co.uk	
5.0	**Any Other Business**	
5.1	Cllr Jardine noted that during the meeting there were a number of topics that SEPA would be most suited to answering and encouraged Valencia to request their attendance at future meetings. It was confirmed that Valencia had invited SEPA to the meeting, and the minutes would be shared with SEPA.	
6.0	**Date of Next Meeting**	
6.1	It was confirmed that Valencia was committed to continuing engagement with the local community, reflecting the current status of the site, the next meeting was proposed for 5th June. This would be held at the Dunbar Town House, 19.00.	