



Note for the Welsh Assembly Government Sustainability Committee

RE: IPC experience of using of Planning Aid Wales

The purpose of this note is to inform the WAG Sustainability Committee about the IPC's experience of seeking to utilise Planning Aid Wales to facilitate a community engagement event. This follows a request for a note at the Sustainability Committee's Meeting on 7th October 2010.

Covanta Energy has notified the IPC that it intends to make an application for development consent in November 2010 for an energy from waste power station at Brig y Cwm. The site lies within the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council administrative area, adjacent to the boundary with Caerphilly County Borough Council.

The IPC has an outreach programme which seeks to inform statutory bodies, local authorities and communities about how and when to engage in the processes set down in the Planning Act 2008, as they relate to applications for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP). The IPC's outreach programme is described in more detail in IPC Advice Note 2, which is attached as Annex 1 to this note.

The IPC met with Covanta Energy Ltd, Merthyr Tydfil CBC and Caerphilly CBC planners in April 2010 to discuss the project. At this meeting the IPC sought the advice of both local authorities about how to engage with hard to reach groups in their areas. The IPC is aware that there are disadvantaged communities living close to the application site that, collectively and as individuals, may not necessarily have access to all the resources that more affluent communities are able to bring to bear when putting forward their views about large developments.

Following the meeting with the local authorities we investigated using Planning Aid Wales (PAW) to help facilitate an outreach event that would engage with the disadvantaged communities near the site. To this end we approached PAW to seek their advice and help in designing and facilitating an appropriate event that would add value to the wider process. The expertise and local knowledge that PAW has is extremely valuable in this context.

At this time the IPC was aware that while Planning Aid in England has received additional funding from CLG to promote and facilitate effective community engagement, the situation in Wales was different. The IPC is currently engaging the services of Planning Aid in England, at no cost, to assist individuals and groups to register as interested parties for our first accepted application for an energy from waste power station in Bedfordshire.

PAW confirmed to us that any services provided by them would incur a cost, however, in June 2010 we asked PAW to provide us with a quote and specification in order to understand the costs that would be involved and the level of service that could be provided.

We received PAW's draft proposal for the Merthyr Tydfil community engagement event on 16th June 2010. The proposal is attached as Annex 2 to this note. The proposal was for an all day event comprised of a mixture of formal sessions and informal "drop-in" sessions between 11 am and 19:30. The total cost quoted by PAW was £4475.

The draft proposal was based on the full cost recovery model. This is because Planning Aid Wales' annual core grant allocation from WAG is not sufficient to cover the resources required for NSIP-related targeted outreach work, which contrasts with the situation in England where the significant uplift in CLG funding for Planning Aid England is specifically identified to support community engagement activities in relation to NSIPs.

PAW made it clear to the IPC that the cost was negotiable and the scope of their preparation and facilitation work could be changed in order to reduce the cost. PAW indicated that they were very keen to assist us with this aspect of our outreach work in Wales and they agreed with us about the need for the IPC to build capacity in disadvantaged communities in order to help them engage with the application process.

The outreach work that we currently undertake is resourced from within our existing operational budget. The procurement by the IPC of marketing services, such as for outreach work, is specifically barred as part of the Government's austerity measures.

Going forward, the IPC continues to recognise the need to engage appropriately with the public and to respond to their needs. To this end we will continue to investigate appropriate ways in which to engage with communities in a way that is achievable within the resources of the IPC. There remains an issue of how communities can gain access to comparable information and advocacy resources in Wales by comparison with those funded by CLG to Planning Aid in England.

ANNEX 1

IPC Advice Note 2 – IPC Outreach Programme

Please refer to attached PDF document or click on the following URL:

<http://infrastructure.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/Advice-note-2-outreach-programme.pdf>

ANNEX 2

Planning Aid Wales' Draft Proposal for the Merthyr Tydfil Community Engagement Event

Cymorth	Planning
Cynllunio	Aid
Cymru	Wales

**DRAFT proposal to
Infrastructure Planning Commission**

Merthyr Tydfil community engagement event

(date and venue to be confirmed)

16th June 2010

1. Aims for the event

a) Accessible

Requirements:

- Careful target marketing to ensure a good spread of local community interests is represented.
- A neutral, community-friendly, flexible venue.
- An accessible event format, use of non-technical language, and relevant exhibition material.
- Opportunities for the public to attend at different times of the day.
- Refreshments available.

b) Informative

Requirements:

- Short, focussed presentations with opportunities for questions and answers;
- Information and advice documentation to hand.

c) Opportunities for one-to-one discussion

Requirements:

- Drop-in session.
- Knowledgeable people on hand to answer questions.

d) Gauge participants' views on promoter's consultation to date.

Requirement:

- Independent evaluation of promoter's consultation programme.

2. Suggested format

- 2.1 Whole day event - 8.30 am to 7.30 pm.
- 2.2 Rolling programme of drop-in sessions, presentations and question and answer sessions – see suggested programme below.
- 2.3 Three formal sessions, each lasting one hour:
10 am to 11 am; 2 pm to 3 pm; 6 pm to 7 pm
- 2.4 Formal sessions punctuated by informal drop-in sessions:
8.30 am to 10 am; 11 am to 2 pm; 3 pm to 6 pm; 7 pm to 7.30 pm
- 2.5 During drop-in sessions, people can:
 - call in to look at information.
 - pick up documentation, including handouts of formal session presentations.
 - seek advice from / discuss issues with people on hand.
 - record their views and opinions on a comments wall.
 - get a cup of tea and biscuit.

3. Suggested outline programme

8.30 am to 10.00 am (Informal 'drop-in' session)

Venue opens to the public.

- IPC and PAW (and promoter, and LPA ?) exhibition material and documentation already in place.
- Refreshments available.
- IPC and PAW people on hand to respond to questions.
- A 'comments wall' with stickies for people to leave messages.

10.00 am to 11.00 am (Formal session)

- Introductions from IPC and PAW – Why are we here? (10 mins)
- Describe outline of session / day. (5 mins – PAW or IPC ?)
- Short IPC presentation – What is the IPC ? What does it do ? How does it work with local communities ? (10 mins)
- Short PAW presentation: (10 mins)
 - What is this new process ?
 - Who are the main players (UK Government, IPC, WAG, LPAs, stakeholders, communities, PAW) ?
 - What can communities do when faced with a large infrastructure proposal ?
- Questions and answers. (10 mins – IPC / PAW)
- Short IPC presentation – What help can the IPC offer in future? Where can people get more information ? How will people be kept updated on the application ? (5 mins)
- Evaluation of promoter consultation to date. (10 mins – PAW / IPC)
- Close.

11.00 am to 2.00 pm Informal 'drop-in' session

2.00 pm to 3.00 pm Formal session (same programme as first)

3.00 pm to 6.00 pm Informal 'drop-in' session

6.00 pm to 7.00 pm Formal session (same programme)

7.00 pm to 7.30 pm Informal 'drop-in' session

4. Estimate of cost

a) Preparation

- Finding an appropriate venue (assumes IPC covers venue costs and deals with venue administration).
- Marketing the event locally (assumes IPC covers costs of local media advertising and printing of marketing materials).
- Preparation of outline session programme.
- Preparation of detailed content for formal sessions.

Chief Executive: 1 day @ £500 / day

Development worker: 1.5 days @ £350 / day

Planner: 1 day @ £400 / day

£1,425

b) Facilitation of event and provision of information and advice

Chief Executive: 1.5* days @ £500 / day

Training Officer: 1.5* days @ £350 / day

Planner: 1.5* days @ £400 / day

Expert volunteer 1.5* days @ £250 / day

(* 11 hour day, excluding travel)

£2,250

c) Travel and subsistence expenses

£600

d) Materials translation and printing

£200

TOTAL: £4,475