Dear Sir,

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR VARIATION OF CONDITIONS 11 AND 12 OF PLANNING PERMISSION DA/94/522C, TO ENABLE RETENTION OF LANDFILL GAS UTILISATION SYSTEM AT WELFORD LANDFILL SITE, COLD ASHBY

Biffa Waste Services Ltd. (Biffa) is applying for planning consent for the variation of Conditions 11 and 12 of Planning Permission DA/94/522C in order to allow the retention of the existing landfill gas utilisation system at Welford Landfill Site beyond the 31st December 2010.

This planning application is submitted electronically via the Planning Portal website and consists of this letter, a completed set of planning application forms and certificates and Drawing 1, which shows the ‘red line’ boundary of planning permission DA/94/522C. A cheque for £170 in respect of the application fee will follow in the post.

Planning permission for the “installation of a landfill gas utilisation system to generate electricity” at Welford Landfill Site was granted on 8th February 1995 (ref: DA/94/522C). This consent permitted the installation and operation of equipment to utilise landfill gas for the generation of electricity, a process which also acts to reduce the proportion of the most environmentally damaging constituents of landfill gas from being released into the atmosphere.

Landfill gas is generated by the degradation (in the absence of air) of biodegradable materials deposited at landfill sites and principally comprises methane and carbon dioxide. The amount of gas produced and period of production at any given landfill site is dependent on the range and quantities of waste deposited at the site and can not easily be predicted accurately. Methane, which typically forms between 40% and 60% of landfill gas, is a potent greenhouse gas and is estimated to be 21 times more damaging than carbon dioxide. It is therefore important to ensure that landfill gas is properly managed for the duration of the gas producing period of a landfill site. In addition to the environmental benefits to be gained by the conversion of methane to less harmful greenhouse gasses by combustion, the utilisation of landfill gas has the advantage of offsetting the requirement for power generation from fossil fuel sources, thus reducing overall fossil fuel consumption and carbon emissions.

Conditions 11 and 12 of planning permission DA/94/522C require the landfill gas utilisation system to be removed by 31st December 2010. The conditions state:
11) “Upon completion of the use of the generating equipment or by the date stated in Condition 12 of this permission, whichever is sooner, all plant, machinery and foundations will be removed from the site and the site shall be restored to agricultural use and left in a clean and tidy condition, all to the satisfaction of the County Planning Authority”

12) “The development hereby permitted shall cease no later than the 31st December 2010 (twenty hundred and ten) by which time the site shall be restored in accordance with the conditions of this permission, all to the satisfaction of the County Planning Authority”

Given that landfill gas arisings from the site are still of a level that require management, it will be necessary to retain the landfill gas utilisation system beyond 31st December 2010, until such a time that landfill gas arising from the site has reduced to such a level that management is no longer required. As such, Biffa is applying to vary Conditions 11 and 12 of planning permission DA/94/522C to read as follows:

11) “Upon completion of the use of the generating equipment, all plant, machinery and foundations will be removed from the site and the site shall be restored to agricultural use and left in a clean and tidy condition.”

12) “The development hereby permitted shall cease when no longer required for landfill gas management and the site shall be restored in accordance with the conditions of this permission”

Should planning permission be granted, the landfill gas utilisation system would continue to operate as currently permitted by planning consent DA/94/522C. All planning conditions attached to the existing consent, other than those for which a variation is specifically sought by this application, would remain extant.

Removing or ceasing to operate the existing landfill gas utilisation system before landfill gas production has reduced to a level whereby the equipment is no longer required would have significant negative environmental consequences. Retention of the equipment would have no significant or unacceptable impact. As such, it is considered that the evidence weighs heavily in favour of planning permission being granted for the variation of the planning conditions in question.

I trust you have sufficient information to enable you to determine this variation of condition planning application, however, should you require anything further, or should you wish to discuss any matter relating to the proposal, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully
Biffa Waste Services Ltd

Bill Gregory
Planner