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Sent: Monday, February 5, 2024 12:15 AM
To: Medworth <Medworth@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Subject: Medworth Incinerator

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I am writing again with reference to the proposed Mega-Incinerator in Wisbech – doubtless you will have received several if not many emails and briefings on this already, but I would like to add my views to the mix. I am the owner of a recruitment business located a few hundred yards from the proposed site, hence my interest and opinions on this incinerator.

I have many, many, concerns.

1: the location: its proximity to schools, to food processing plants, businesses and housing. With the best will in the world, MVV can make all the promises they like about control of emissions and smell – we don't believe them. The fall-out from their 300 foot (300 foot!!) chimney will cover a vast area and the potential for illness, contamination and pollution can't even begin to be calculated. We are well aware of hundreds of emissions breaches at other incinerator sites in the UK. I'm sure they're jolly apologetic but the damage is already done. Additionally, there is no carbon capture proposed and where the emissions from the two giant chimneys will land is completely unknown.

2: the smell. Waste for incineration will be coming in by lorry and placed on site until such time as it is incinerated. This is waste product, and it will smell. Again, reference to food factories and people – we will have to put up with it, seems to be the attitude. I understand that the waste storage area will be only a few yards from the Birds Eye processing facility. I accept that material being stored prior to incineration will be contained – but this cannot be the case during transportation and transfer.

3: volumes of traffic. Wisbech has a bypass, the A47. This is a single carriageway road, with three roundabouts leading into Wisbech itself. Incinerator traffic coming either from the Peterborough or King's Lynn directions from the A47 during construction and subsequent use will all be taking the turning at Cromwell Road, then turning right into New Bridge Lane. Traffic coming from any other direction will have to come through town, negotiating its inadequate and poorly maintained roads, roundabouts, traffic lights etc, so there will be issues whichever route these lorries take. A single broken-down vehicle on the A47 can cause several miles of slow moving traffic and substantial delays. I know this as I'm one of the drivers who regularly gets stuck... generally speaking the police are needed to control traffic flow and safeguard the vehicle/driver who's broken down. The traffic at Elm Roundabout (the A1101) across the A47 is appalling at every time of day. It already takes nearly half an hour to get from Emneth to Weasenham Lane by car, a distance of less than 3 miles (my office manager makes this journey daily). Weasenham Lane is closed with monotonous regularity to deal with potholes, sink holes, leaks etc (Weasenham Lane would become a route for lorries carrying construction materials and subsequently waste) – there is, I believe, a waterway below Weasenham Lane which causes at least some of these problems: an additional 300 heavy goods vehicles a day can only add to the issues. There is also the pollution from the 300 vehicle movements per day: diesel, tyres, brakes etc.

4: facilities for drivers. I have seen no mention of facilities for drivers at all. There will be drivers arriving in the area who need to take breaks (under Drivers' Hours or Road Transport (Working Time)

Regulations) so they will need to park somewhere for 45 minutes, and will further need toilet facilities at the very least. It is likely that, however well-planned the logistics are, lorries will need to queue/park prior to unloading. Algores Way and Boleness Road are already difficult to access at certain times because of lorries queued/parked prior to tipping at Birds Eye, and also outside the DAF garage on Algores Way (a particular bugbear as they block the turning into/from Europa Way, and further block the view round a bend in the road so getting past them is fraught with danger), and there is nowhere open and available 24/7 for them. As a result it is not unusual to find bottles and even plastic bags containing human waste in these areas.

5: employment prospects. These would appear to be minimal, as the facility once complete requires very few people to actually run it. The figure quoted is 40 jobs created in total. Construction is going to be outside the UK (in Germany) to a significant degree, and the drivers will be bringing waste from outside the area so there won't be any prospects there either. Counter such reduced employment opportunities with the number of food production sites who may be forced to relocate – food standards cannot be breached and we are already hearing relocation rumours linked to the risks of waste contamination – we are looking at the loss of several hundred jobs. For myself, I am already looking for possible office sites away from my current area: I don't want my staff or me to suffer poor air quality, foul smells, and increased journey times, and if approval is given for this incinerator we will definitely relocate. I am fortunate in that I rent my current premises - I have huge sympathy for those potential near-neighbours who own their sites and are going to be stuck with this monstrosity if it goes ahead.

6: incineration itself. I am no expert on this but I have read reports that indicate that incineration is not the way towards Net Zero. Scotland and Wales have banned all future incinerators, the EU is strongly against them. There is going to be a million-tonne incinerator at Boston, with a significant part of its waste coming by sea – where is the need for another one only 30 miles away with inadequate roads and access?

7: local objections. Every single local council (parish, town and county) is against this development, including near neighbours in Norfolk (Wisbech is right on the border – parts of Wisbech are actually in Norfolk) plus our local MP Steve Barclay and South West Norfolk's Liz Truss, and obviously people like me who are part of the WisWIn (Wisbech Without Incineration) group.

It is simply too close to existing population, schools, and food preparation sites. There are also developments under way for new housing which are equally close. Owners of a site (effectively next-door-but-one, 500 yards from the MVV site) have abandoned their plans for building an hotel, shops etc and put the site up for sale again: who in their right mind would want to stay in an hotel 500 yards away from the view and smell of a gigantic waste incinerator?

Further, Wisbech is a small market town surrounded by arable farmland. Every inch of field built on can never be reclaimed for agricultural use again, and I don't think it's possible to count that loss on any measure.

The location of Wisbech itself is unsuitable for a development of this kind. We don't have the access to a good road network, the current town infrastructure is poor, and we're an agricultural area.

This isn't a wealthy area. Despite the 250+ listed buildings, Wisbech isn't particularly beautiful, except in parts; it's shabby and has its issues with anti-social behaviour. We feel that Cambridge and Peterborough get rather more than their fair share of investment for roads, improvements, public transport, policing (we don't even have a police station open to the public any more)... What we need is massive investment into something that will genuinely benefit the town and its people – a mega incinerator is not the solution. The abandoned proposals for a hotel and shops would have been far more beneficial for potential employment and facilities available. A project to improve Norfolk Street would be wonderful... it would make a fabulous covered arcade if only there was the money for it!

If there has to be another incinerator, and I am not convinced that this is the case, it should be somewhere on a brown field site, near (but not in) a large town or city with adequate road links north south east and west. My apologies to Peterborough – but it would be a far more suitable location for a development like this. I cannot accept that moving waste from heavily populated areas to a small market town surrounded by fields is in any way in line with proximity principles.

Finally: I care very much about Wisbech and its future. It has good people who deserve better than to have MVV avoiding planning regulations by claiming that this is a nationally significant infrastructure project and riding roughshod over all comers, calling meetings at short notice at times when people can't attend, claiming benefits to the town that aren't wanted (recycling information courses, anyone? A play area in a part of Wisbech that didn't even know about it and have never requested it?).

Please, please, reject this incinerator proposal

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