

PINS RECEIVED

U 3 JUN 2020

Mrs Sue Beel

The Planning Inspectorate
Temple Quay House
Temple Quay
BRISTOL
BS1 6PN

24th May 2020

Dear Sir or Madam

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the building of the proposed mega incinerator in Wisbech by MVV Environment Ltd.

The proposal is for the generation of more than 50 megawatts of electricity which means it qualifies as a nationally significant infrastructure project. As such the outcome on the application will be made by the Secretary of State and avoid a local planning decision. This goes against the established democratic planning system and local accountability and is more likely to ignore or misinterpret the wishes of people who will live near it.

My particular concerns are set out below:

Visual impact

This enormous structure will have a huge impact on the flat fenland landscape and will dwarf every other building in the district. The chimney at up to 95m high (compared with the spire of Ely Cathedral at 66m) and the boiler house of up to 50m will be visible for miles around and be totally out of character in this flat and very rural landscape.

Effects on air quality and health

As I understand it, in spite of emissions cleaning, carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases will still be released into the atmosphere as well as fine particulates which are harmful to the health of people living locally and downwind and also to some of the most productive farmland in the country. Public Health England has warned that the electromagnetic fields generated by the proposed mega incinerator could lead to serious health conditions including childhood leukaemia.

Lorry movements

One of my main concerns is the number of lorry movements that this mega incinerator will generate as waste is brought in from surrounding counties and over a huge rural area seven days a week. The roads around Wisbech are unsuitable, almost all single carriageway and already carrying a high proportion of HGVs. The A47 is an extremely busy road, accidents are frequent and the road is regularly closed as a result.

Lorries would no doubt use even less suitable rural roads as short cuts and because they will be coming from all directions. All roads in Fenland have regular problems with breaking up because of the unconsolidated nature of the subsoil and they are too narrow for lorries to pass. They have no pavements or cycle lanes so are very dangerous for other users.

Quality of life for local people

I cannot believe that it is proposed to build a massive incinerator within the built-up area of a town where people live. The proposed site is just 750m from the Thomas Clarkson Academy, the largest secondary school in the district, and 300m from the Aces Eye Clinic as well as its proximity to other schools and residential areas. The roads within the town are already congested and hazardous for pedestrians and cyclists. The visual impact, traffic, noise and potential odour all threaten people's health, well being and quality of life.

Impact on local plans for growth in Wisbech

There are advanced plans for major growth in Wisbech closely linked to the re-instatement of the Wisbech Rail Link, partly to relieve pressure on the overheated housing market around Cambridge in the south of the county. It is hoped that the expansion will bring with it a major increase in skilled jobs (far more than the 40 permanent jobs offered by the incinerator), environmental enhancement and cultural, retail and leisure development as well, making the town a more attractive place to live and work. Building a mega incinerator within the town is likely to put paid to all this as people will not want to move here.

Impact on recycling

This is one of my main concerns. We should be recycling a lot more than we do at present. I believe that pressure to meet waste targets required to generate 50mw of electricity will encourage more waste and divert materials which are currently recycled as well as removing incentives to find new ways of recycling.

Consideration of alternative sites

I understand that the developer has not shown that 'reasonable alternatives have been considered and the reasons for selecting the preferred option' as recommended by the Planning Inspectors' Advice. I would question why this was not done. Was Wisbech seen as an easy and cheap option in a town where the development may face less opposition than in places like King's Lynn and Waterbeach?

Flood risk

Finally, I would draw attention to the fact that the proposed site is on land at risk of flooding, land that is considered by the Environment Agency to be unsuitable for house building. There is potential risk of contamination of drinking water and soils, and flooding could reduce the proposed lifetime of the proposed incinerator quite considerably.

In conclusion, I strongly believe that building energy from waste incinerators uses out-of-date technology and is not consistent with a responsible approach to climate change and human health. New, less carbon-based technologies for dealing with waste and producing heat and power should be developed instead.

The town of Wisbech is not the place to site an incinerator. People live here and their lives, health and well-being, as well as the environment should be taken into account. Developers must not ride rough-shod over their views.

Finally, I urge that the timescale for decision making is pushed back, especially as the scoping request was released over the Christmas holiday period and consultation has not been taking place owing to the Coronavirus lock down.

Yours sincerely



Sue Beel

Copies of this letter have been sent to:

MVV Environment Ltd

The Planning Inspectorate

The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industry Strategy

The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

Stephen Barclay, MP