

Proposed Energy from Waste plant at Gt Blakenham

Introduction

SITA have established a level of trust in the Gipping Valley community taking an open and honest approach to communication. However that does not remove the fundamental objection to this application from people who care for the environment, for visual amenity, road congestion or are concerned about the population's health.

Independence

While I have great respect for the integrity of councillors on this committee, electors find it difficult to believe there is no significant element of pre determination. Councillors have taken part in many debates that have examined aspects of waste disposal and have chosen to pursue the energy from waste route. The committee is part of the County Council, how can it be independent? How can any Suffolk County Councillor have an open mind in this decision when the County finances are so critically dependant on the outcome?

Technologies

Alternative technologies have not been evaluated with an open mind since initial decisions in 2005/6. Much is made of the reduction in fugitive methane, a potent greenhouse gas from landfill if incineration is adopted but the reduction would be achieved by other technologies without generation of CO₂. This is not safe.

Health

People are concerned that for instance the impact of emissions of NO₂ on health of Asthma sufferers is found acceptable with predicted environmental concentrations at 72.6% of recommended maximums with no statement of the problems for sufferers at this level. There is no clear information available of the likelihood of increased health problems or reduced life expectancy from plant emissions overlaid on the background from the A14, just a belief that if pollutants are below European limits then all is well.

Visual Impact

The proposed incinerator is a massive building some three times the height of the largest highways depot building and clearly would impact the visual amenity of residents in Gt Blakenham, Claydon and Barham. It is situated in the Gipping Valley at the edge of a small industrial estate which has no buildings over three storeys high. Your photo montages make an honest attempt to show the impact of the building but are at best a poor approximation to the true visual effect.

At the recent site visit there was little attempt to ensure that participants had a clear appreciation of the size of the proposed facility. A lot of time was spent enjoying a visit to Shrublands but there were at best hurried stops at other listed buildings or population centres where visual amenity would be compromised.

Traffic

While I accept that most HGV traffic from this site will move via the B1113 to the A14 there is a substantial problem at the Lodge Lane, Bramford Road junction now caused by prosperous businesses servicing container and other services from Felixstowe. The application makes no attempt to address these issues, an oversight, perhaps based on a false expectation of action to support the SnOasis development. This must be corrected by an additional lane and signalling or site operation will be compromised.

Community benefit

The local communities will be damaged if this application succeeds but gain no benefit that is not enjoyed by all of Suffolk. Applications by others via MSDC have contributed funds, proportional to power output, directly to local communities as a right, not subject to a project specific application process. I believe such action would be appropriate here to provide a demonstrable benefit that generates goodwill.

Conclusion

Even if we accept this technology, a mistake I believe, but one that is deeply ingrained then it is clearly in the wrong place. I would urge you to reject the application, but if you find that impossible then please add conditions to address the highways issues and to provide some compensatory community benefit to adjacent villages.