



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
OXFORDSHIRE

Vale of White Horse District

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John Duncalfe, Esq.
Planning Officer
Oxfordshire County Council

8th July, 2011

Dear Mr Duncalfe

Amended WRG application to build a MBT plant

Your ref: MW.0129/10

Objection

We refer to the above application by Waste Recycling Group (WRG) to build a Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) plant at Sutton Courtenay and our earlier objections of 6 Oct 2011.

Our objection to the proposal rests on several areas of particular interest to our aim of protecting rural Oxfordshire.

CPRE wishes to reinforce its objection to this amended application because it runs counter to three Landscape Policies covering the site as laid out in the Vale Local Plan 2011, namely:

- NE9. Lowland Vale. “Development will not be permitted if it would have an adverse effect on the landscape, particularly on the long open views within or across the area.”
- NE11. Areas for Landscape Enhancement. “Proposals for development ... must provide a landscaping scheme which enhances the appearance of the area. Development which would further erode or damage the character of the landscape will not be permitted.”
- NE10. Urban Fringes and Countryside Gaps. “Development or changes of use which would harm their essentially open or rural character will not be permitted.”

The amended MBT remains a massive, permanent, industrial building in the countryside, some 321m long by 114m wide, and is still much larger than required to meet the proposed input. It will be highly visible in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, especially when Didcot A is dismantled. It will bring an industrial feel to what is essentially a very rural landscape. The impact on the surrounding countryside will be marked. It is quite clear that these policies cover the application and that, if Planning has a purpose, the amended application must be rejected.

CPRE also wishes to strengthen its objection to this application because it is contrary to Policy W14 of the Local Plan; namely, it is a Greenfield site and the application fails to establish that there is an overriding need or that there is no other suitable alternative site for dealing with London and Berkshire’s waste. Moreover there is particular objection to the cumulative impact of this plant in addition to early permissions for an In Vessel Composter, a Material Recycling Facility and the extension of the landfill until 2030.

CPRE remains concerned about potential flooding, which WRG have failed again to address in the amended application and considers that the proposal remains contrary to policies DC13 and DC 14. Moreover the failure of WRG to meet the earlier Condition 73 of CM 59 and produce a detailed flood scheme exacerbates that concern. It indicates an unwillingness on the part of WRG to analyse the implications of its various activities at Sutton Courtenay properly. It is in our view the County Council’s responsibility to require such an analysis prior to any consideration by the Planning Committee of this application.

In our earlier comments, we also raised the issue of Traffic as a serious concern to the CPRE, and this remains. In view of the reservations expressed by Highways in respect of the earlier application, we would urge the Council to seek the Authority’s views as to the extent the applicant has now addressed the points they had raised.

CPRE also deem that the application should not be considered further, until the details of the enlarged rail siding are included, and these and an analysis of the practicality of increasing the rail traffic to the site been subjected to proper public consultation.

CPRE also consider that the already inadequate noise impact analysis has not been adjusted to reflect the amendments to the plant and again therefore that no further consideration should be given to the application until a fresh noise analysis is circulated for public consultation.

Finally, CPRE is now more than ever concerned about potential 'planning creep'. It is clear from the inadequate coverage of the planning history and WRG's poor record and history of seeking variations to planning permissions, that it is intent on developing a large industrial centre on a Greenfield site which is due to be returned to agricultural use in 2030. Moreover, this would involve drawing waste from an ever wider region, contrary to the proximity principle.

In October 2009, Oxfordshire County Council's Planning Committee, which had been recommended to approve WRG's planning application for an incinerator, threw out the application on the grounds that it conflicted with the Vale District Council's Local Plans which aim to protect the open countryside from 'large permanent buildings'. CPRE would strongly urge that this development be similarly resisted.

We should also reiterate that should the application be approved in principle, CPRE will be seeking for it to be called-in by the Secretary of State and subject to a full public inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Peter Collins

Dr P. J Collins, Chairman, CPRE, Vale of White Horse District

Copy to David Rothery, Esq.
Vale of White Horse District Council