



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
OXFORDSHIRE

Vale of White Horse District

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Ms Mary Thompson
Planning Officer
Oxfordshire County Council

6th October 2010

Dear Ms Thompson

Ref: WRG application to build a MBT plant 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.

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

CPRE wishes to object to this 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 proposed MBT is a massive, permanent, industrial building in the countryside, some 370m long by 130 wide, which is four times the size of the incinerator that was proposed by WRG at this site and rejected previously. 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 application must be rejected.

CPRE also wishes to object 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.

CPRE is also concerned about potential flooding. The site is already subject to considerable flooding, and the proposal is contrary to Policies DC13 and DC14 of the Local Plan concerning the risks of increased flooding.

Traffic is also a serious concern to the CPRE. The implications of operating a scheme of this size on the dependent existing transport system are clearly onerous, possibly fatal. The proposal to import waste from Berkshire and London will greatly add to the already unacceptable congestion at the A34/Milton interchange. A comprehensive survey is required of the traffic, plus the overall air quality and CO2 emissions, impact on all roads in the vicinity that will be involved in the operations associated with this plant.

Finally, CPRE is concerned about potential 'planning creep'. WRG have a poor record and a history of seeking variations to planning permissions. The site is due to be returned to agricultural use in 2030. The granting of this application invites WRG over time to develop a large industrial regional waste centre on a Greenfield site.

In October 2009, the 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 also consider that the application, if it were to be approved in principle, should be called-in by the Secretary of State and subject to a full public inquiry.

Yours sincerely

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