

Submission by Anthony Clee, Bsc (Hons) Society and Technology, PGCE
Ref No 20032419

My name is Anthony Clee. I am part of the anti-incineration campaign group WisWin, but these are my own observations as a concerned resident of Wisbech having lived here for the past 22 years.

The intention of this submission is to demonstrate the inadequate nature of this proposal to satisfy the requirements of a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, either locally or nationally. It should therefore be dismissed.

Transport and Traffic (Ch6)

The proposal is deeply flawed. The applicant seeks to demonstrate that the road infrastructure surrounding Wisbech is capable of sustaining the massive increase in construction machinery, HGVs and smaller lorries, trucks and vehicles which is essential for this development to function in the way the applicant intends. It fails to do so.

Most importantly, it conflicts with local and national policies which are intended to provide a sustainable pathway now and extending well beyond forty years into the future, (the lifetime of this development), concerning what to do with our waste, our transport needs, climate change, and how to balance all these with our own human health and welfare.

Impact on Transport Infrastructure, the A47

The development will have a substantial, and I contend, overwhelming impact on the surrounding transport infrastructure. This consists wholly of single carriageways vulnerable to congestion and closures due to accidents or breakdowns.

It is the only route chosen by the applicant to carry this additional burden. It is the main strategic corridor East and West by which most road users, whether freight, holidaymakers or commuters, access the important towns and cities such as Kings Lynn, Norwich, Great Yarmouth and the North Norfolk coast as well as the port of Felixstow. Or west to Peterborough and all points North and South.

Alternatives to the A47 and Mitigation in the event of closure or congestion

A recent accident at the roundabout where the A47 meets Elm High Road meant that the road was closed both ways between the A1101 at Wisbech and the A17 near Kings Lynn. Long diversions were put in place due to weight limits on

surrounding roads and the location of the collision. The closure lasted seven hours. (Reported in the Fenland Citizen, 16/1/23)

This route, the A47, is the only one discussed by the applicant in order to deliver and take away waste, consumables and residues from the development in order to avoid the town centre. Such accidents cannot be avoided. Heavy congestion, especially during the summer, always needs to be avoided if possible, or some reasonable mitigation sought. Is it?

Mitigation

Beyond widening the access to New Bridge Lane and making it two way to allow for to and fro movements for the HGVs which will arrive and depart every two minutes, there is nothing more than the provision of a pedestrian crossing and roadside signs. Is that sufficient?

The A 1101

The applicant suggests Wisbech Town centre will be out of bounds for all the HGV loads. This will be part of the contract. None of the contractors will use this route which forms the connection between the A17 both North and South.

Who will police it?

Who will ensure 625,000 tonnes of waste and thousands more in residues does not make its way through town? The contractors themselves, with the applicant as an overseer, able to mount surveillance throughout the seven days in which the incinerator needs feeding and residues taken away, not only during the suggested working hours from 7am to 8pm, but the extended hours also permitted in order to ensure that these activities are carried out. This is during the operational phase, but the constructional one suffers from the same fundamental flaws.

Will a foreign owned company be open to complaints of infringements by the concerned citizens of Wisbech and beyond?

Impact on Local People

This development, if consented, will bring absolutely no benefits to Wisbech. Nor is it intended to. Neighbouring industries will close, the steam generated as a by product mostly rejected where existing contracts stipulate absolute standards of purity. Jobs lost, local amenity destroyed, properties devalued and decent schools subject to years of construction work passing by them.

In addition, the future operational phase offering nothing but increased traffic fumes and noise as well as issues of safety.

Adjoining agricultural land contaminated by long lived chemicals. The remaining historic nature of this small town obliterated by the hundreds of vehicular movements by day and night with little rest or respite. Will emergency services, particularly fire, be able to reach the site quickly? Lives blighted, good health and a safe home, the two most important qualities of life, brought into question.

Impact on a National Basis

There are few benefits to be gained on a National Basis either. It will squeeze the last drop of energy from the plastic waste it will burn. But it will ride roughshod over National Policies intended to protect our common future.

- 1) Climate Change and Net Zero?
Dismissed by suggesting the facility will displace other energy generation.
- 2) The Proximity Principle, dealing with waste locally instead of drawing it from 12 authorities covering nine counties?
Subsumed under the needs of the incinerator
- 3) The Waste Hierarchy
With landfill, (which is taxed), and incineration, (which is not), both at the bottom, with reduction, recycling and reuse of materials at the top. Countered by the absurd notion that all 625,000 tonnes would otherwise end up in landfill.
- 4) Misleadingly described as a renewable energy source and able to draw massive subsidies which are undeserved.
- 5) Excluded from the Emissions Trading Scheme which charges polluters for burning fossil fuels.
- 6) The intended reduction or ban on single use plastics? The intention to halve the amount of residual household and industrial waste?
Over capacity is not mentioned.
- 7) The wear and tear on the local and national road infrastructure?
The taxpayer will cover the cost.

We are informed that any application must not breach legal or treaty obligations, and that any adverse impacts must not outweigh the benefits. For Wisbech there are none. For the wider national interest beyond generating electricity in the most inefficient and expensive way possible when all costs are taken into account, there are none. If consented it will place a blight on the local area and an additional degree of uncertainty and cost on the wider community. It needs to be rejected.