

Bexley Labour Group statement on Cory Incinerator Riverside Energy Park and decarbonisation plan
Bexley Labour group of Councillors have consistently opposed the initial construction of the Cory waste incinerator and further recent expansions, due to major environmental factors and the negative impact this and other various industrial operations have on the area in terms of dust, air quality, odour, and heavy traffic.

This scheme would not support increasing recycling rates, indeed there is evidence that local authorities, including Bexley, which use this facility have seen their recycling rates suppressed. Reuse and recycle is the future, climate change is an emergency for resolving today, not tomorrow.

When the recent proposals for the 'Cory riverside Energy Park' were put forward major concerns were raised regarding the connection to the National grid and the ensuing traffic disruption and traffic delays along the A2016 corridor has had a huge impact on businesses, local communities, and the environment, particularly impacting on the Northend road/Thames Road. The increased traffic and congestion because of the cable laying to Littlebrook power station has impacted on air quality because of the disruption. Although 75% of future waste entering the plant would be by river, still 25 % would arrive by road, further impacting on congestion in the area.

It is worth noting that the area most affected by this incinerator, the riparian wards of Thamesmead East, Belvedere, Erith and Slade Green and Northend wards are part of the councils projected 30,000 growth strategy to unlock development on underutilised industrial land, the map of the surrounding area could look very different in 10 years' time, and this should be considered seriously when proposing further expansion of this site.

This plant, plus plans for the new decarbonisation plan will have a detrimental impact on the immediately adjacent Crossness nature reserve and could have a lasting impact on wildlife, biodiversity and the habitats carefully nurtured over many years. These new proposals do not do enough to protect this well used and well-liked local amenity, why did Cory not consider other more suitable local sites, which would be less damaging to London's biodiversity

The latest plans to extract the Co2 from the exhaust that the leaves the current facility, will be compressed to make a liquid, which will be shipped out to sea, where the Co2 will then be released into voids where there was once natural gas. These plans have gone through the initial consultation and will require further planning inspectorate hearings before these plans are actioned.

Bexley Labour Group question the need for waste incineration in this area, as this will detrimentally impact on recycling rates and reduce waste, indeed incineration could become obsolete as government policy evolves. Whilst we completely understand the benefits of decarbonisation and the removing carbon from the atmosphere, there is clearly still concern from residents and local groups at the disruption to local habitats and wildlife

We feel strongly that more effort should be undertaken to reduce waste significantly and incentivise more recycling, making it easier for people in businesses and public services to recycle and people living in flats, rather than encouraging profits from incineration.

It was clear that Cory has consistently prioritised profit over the wellbeing of local communities and wildlife, and we will continue to raise our concerns about the incinerator and work with the Labour government, the local MP. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] to deliver a greener future with green jobs and skills revolution to tackle climate change.