



## ***Respecting the past, shaping the future***

Press release from  
Suffolk Preservation Society  
Date: 18/ 03/ 09

### **“Flawed” consultation should be scrapped, campaigners urge**

A “flawed” consultation asking for views on five potential sites for new residual waste treatment plants should be immediately scrapped and started again, leading campaigners have urged.

Suffolk Preservation Society said it was “highly concerned” by Suffolk County Council’s Minerals and Waste Development Framework, which asked for opinions on sites earmarked for potential “residual waste treatment” facilities.

But the results of the consultation, the society says, will be worthless because the council has failed to gauge public opinion on exactly what processes should be used to “treat” the waste in the first place.

SPS has now urged the council to go back to basics and consult first on all of the different options available for waste treatment before looking at individual sites.

“The future of waste disposal is a profoundly important topic, and looking at possible treatment sites without first considering the processes which will be used to treat that waste is fundamentally flawed and inherently wrong,” said Richard Ward, society director.

“We feel very strongly that the council should have asked for views on how best to treat waste long before any potential sites for new plants were drawn up – otherwise how can you possibly know which site is most suitable? As such, we do not agree that any of the proposed sites are appropriate in any way, shape or form.

“The fact that the council has not consulted on these various options is bordering on undemocratic as it limits the responses which people can give – in turn making the results completely worthless.”

The society said the council’s reluctance to consult on the different options available for disposing of waste, taken alongside hints given in the document, suggested a decision to dispose using incineration had already been taken.

“It seems that incineration appears to be Suffolk County Council’s favoured option, but we understand in Essex this method of disposal has been deemed as inappropriate,” added Mr Ward.

“The questions have to be asked – why it is considered the best way forward for Suffolk yet not Essex? And where exactly does incineration fit in with the council’s aims to become the Greenest County?”

“The whole rationale and focus for selecting sites and assessing their suitability appears based on the potentially false premise that incineration is the agreed way forward when clearly it is not.

“It is now critical that the council scraps this consultation and starts again, this time making sure all of the factual information and options are available for others to comment on.”

The society said a much more holistic and sustainable approach was needed as the search for alternatives to landfill continues – and urged planners to look at new ways of minimising and reducing waste rather than simply concentrating on disposal.

Successful campaigns such as the drive to reduce the use of plastic bags in supermarkets showed, the society added, that efforts to reduce and minimise could have a major impact on cutting the amount going to landfill.

“The campaign to reduce the usage of plastic carrier bags in supermarkets has shown what can be achieved if the waste problem is tackled at source and head on,” added Mr Ward. “It demonstrates how the position can change for the better in a very short timetable.

“The county council’s proposals don’t seem to take these possible reductions into account, making their forecast of the amount of waste which will be produced in the future inaccurate.

“We would urge the council to take great caution on making major policy decisions based on what we see as limited and potentially seriously flawed forecasts.”

## **Ends**

### **Note to editors:**

SPS, founded in 1929, originally worked to protect the county’s buildings and landscape. Today, the society has broadened its focus to help shape Suffolk’s future, largely campaigning for sensitive and appropriate development, more and better quality affordable homes and to ensure sustainable infrastructures are in place to support the county’s communities.

The five sites identified for waste treatment facilities in the consultation are:

- The former sugar refinery, Sproughton
- Shepherd’s Grove Industrial Estate, Stanton/ Hepworth
- Eye Airfield Industrial Estate, Eye
- Masons Quarry, Great Blakenham
- Suffolk County Council Highways Depot, Great Blakenham

### **For more information please contact:**

Richard Ward, SPS Director, on 01787 247179, or Liz Hearnshaw at Zenith Public Relations on 01284 760025.