

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL'S WASTE CORE STRATEGY

What's all the fuss about?

For the past three years, Suffolk County Council has been developing a plan to deal with the county's waste over the next 15 years. The plan includes earmarking more than 200 acres of Eye Airfield for waste management purposes as and when the need arises.

Eye is one of only three sites on which a projected 330,000 tonnes of waste will have to be processed annually. Depending on the size of the plant, one, two or all three of these sites could be utilised for that purpose.

It is not known for certain whether Eye will be a chosen site, nor what type of treatment plant would be built on it or when. There are however, very strong arguments for believing that Eye could be the favoured site above the other two and that the plant that would be built on it would be a massive incinerator complex that would dwarf what is already there.

Such an incinerator would be likely to have a turbine hall up to 45 metres high and a chimney 90 metres high. Compare this to the Fibropower chicken litter power station already on the airfield, which has a chimney 33.5 metres high.

The safeguarded area on the airfield is so great that eventually a whole suite of treatment facilities could be built there, such as biodigesters and open-air composting.

In the three years during which the plan has been developed there have been five stages of public consultation. You would think this would have given everyone ample opportunity to make their views known. The process has been so ineffective, however, that even now the majority of people you will meet know absolutely nothing at all about the plan, nor the potential consequences of it to all the communities around Eye Airfield. The so-called consultation has therefore been very unrepresentative of the views of the majority

On 17 March 2011, the Executive Committee of Suffolk County Council will consider the adoption of the plan, the official title of which is the Waste Core Strategy (WCS), as policy. Once enshrined in policy it will be extremely difficult to oppose any proposed waste-related development on the airfield, even though it would have to go through the planning process.

Although there are uncertainties and unknowns, can we afford to pass up any opportunity for protest if we feel the airfield is the wrong place for this sort of use? Only concentrated pressure and intense lobbying at all levels may now be able to exert some influence on the adoption of the WCS as policy in its present form.

What can you do about it?

If you feel strongly about leaving such a potential legacy to the younger generation, you should write or e-mail your concerns to ANY or ALL of the following people (even if they don't specifically represent your parish) – and perhaps even phone them as well (where possible) to press your objections home. They all have a duty to listen to your concerns and they are all in a position to represent you at some level. They are roughly set out in decreasing order of influence as you go down the list, so if you have to make a choice, concentrate on the first few. The same letter can go to each one. If you have children who understand the situation and have their own views on it, get them to write as well, preferably in their own hand and stating their age.

- Dr Dan Poulter – MP for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich (includes Palgrave, Thrandeston, Yaxley, Braiseworth, Stoke Ash and parishes eastwards)
 - address: Dan Poulter MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA
e-mail: daniel.poulter.mp@parliament.uk
phone: 0207 219 3000 (parliamentary office)
- David Ruffley – MP for Bury St Edmunds constituency (includes Wortham, Burgate, Mellis, the Thornhams and Gislingham parishes)
 - address: David Ruffley MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA
e-mail: info@telldavidruffley.com
phone: 0207 219 2880 (parliamentary office)
- Cllr Jeremy Pembroke – Leader of Suffolk County Council
 - address: Tye House, Kersey Tye, Ipswich, IP7 6HB
e-mail: jeremy.pembroke@suffolk.gov.uk
phone: 01473 264012 (business) mobile: 07787 633805
- Cllr Guy McGregor – Strategic Planning Portfolio Holder and County Councillor for Hoxne and Eye Division (includes Eye, Hoxne, Denham and Redlingfield parishes)
 - address: Time House, Low Street, Hoxne, IP21 5AR
e-mail: guy.mcgregor@suffolk.gov.uk
phone: 01379 668434 & 01379 870339 (business) mobile: 07711 299432
- Cllr Charles Michell – County Councillor for Hartismere Division (includes Palgrave, Stuston, Brome & Oakley, Thrandeston, Yaxley, Wortham, Burgate, Mellis, Gislingham and the Thornhams parishes)
 - address: Linden House, 16 Lambseth Street, Eye IP23 7AG
e-mail: charles.michell@suffolk.gov.uk
phone: 01379 870280
- Cllr Andrew Stringer – County Councillor for Upper Gipping Division (includes Braiseworth, Stoke Ash, Occold and Thorndon parishes)
 - address: 1 Broadway House, Broad Road, Cotton, Stowmarket, IP14 4ND
e-mail: andrew.stringer@suffolk.gov.uk
phone: 01449 780339 mobile: 07545 423842
- Cllr Tim Passmore – Leader of Mid Suffolk District Council
 - address: Willow Farm, Norwich Road, Thwaite, IP23 7ED
e-mail: timothy.passmore@midsuffolk.gov.uk
phone: 01449 767023
- Cllr David Laurie – District Councillor for Palgrave Ward (includes Palgrave, Stuston, Brome & Oakley, Thrandeston and Yaxley parishes)
 - address: Place Farm, Stuston, Diss, Norfolk IP21 4AD
e-mail: david.laurie@midsuffolk.gov.uk
phone: 01379 740743
- Cllr Diana Kearsley – District Councillor for Gillingham Ward (includes Wortham, Burgate, Mellis, Gislingham and the Thornhams parishes)
 - address: Lady Margaret House, Mill Street, Gislingham, IP23 8JP
e-mail: diana.kearsley@midsuffolk.gov.uk
phone: 01379 783061

- Cllr Charles Flatman – District Councillor for Eye Ward (contains only Eye parish)
 - *address:* Post Office Flat, 12 Broad Street, Eye, IP23 7AA
e-mail: charles.flatman@midsuffolk.gov.uk
phone: 01379 871145 *mobile:* 07941 842516

- Cllr Elizabeth Gibson-Harries – District Councillor for Hoxne Ward (includes Hoxne, Denham and Redlingfield parishes)
 - *address:* Rose Cottage, The Street, Horham, IP21 5DX
e-mail: elizabeth.gibson-harries@midsuffolk.gov.uk
phone: 01379 384680

- Cllr Charles Tilbury – District Councillor for Wetheringsett Ward (includes Braiseworth, Stoke Ash and Thorndon parishes)
 - *address:* The Old Rectory, Wetheringsett, Stowmarket, IP14 5PP
e-mail: charles.tilbury@midsuffolk.gov.uk
phone: 01449 767857

What can you say?

Using the following points as a guide, write a letter or e-mail in your own words. Tempting though it may be, try to avoid copying and pasting from the list. Letters of this type carry much more weight if they are perceived by the recipient as individual. Pick from the list; you don't have to include everything only issue about which you have genuine concerns – your letter is likely to be most forceful if you pick out the things you feel most passionate about. Say that you object to the Waste Core Strategy and ask the person to whom you are writing to use their best efforts to persuade the County Council to **rethink the adoption of it in its present form**.

- **Community empowerment**
Complain about the near total ineffectiveness of the consultation process. Even after three years and five consultation stages, many people know nothing about this.
- **Inappropriate proximity to schools, etc.**
The site is extremely close to centres of learning and health care. Many nurseries, pre-schools and primary schools live in its shadow. And, of course it will be a mere stone's throw from Hartismere High School, Hartismere Hospital, which is now being given a new lease of life and may soon become even more important to the area, the Gilchrist Birthing Unit and Complementary Medicine Centre and Eye Health Centre itself.
- **Employment potential**
Waste management will employ very few people and will discourage other developers from coming to the site with businesses that would result in greater employment density.
- **Traffic impact**
A waste treatment plant of this magnitude would need a 20-tonne lorry every 7 minutes to feed it, and would generate significant HGV movements. This would have a huge impact on the local road network. A similar site at Stanton was dropped from the WCS because the A143 was deemed unsuitable. The A140 is no better able to deal with such a large increase in traffic volume. Lorries coming from a distance could use minor roads, such as the one past Mellis school, as cut-throughs.
- **Waste miles**
Eye is about as far away from all the major centres of waste creation in the county as you can get. It is therefore the most costly in terms of waste miles of all the sites. Waste should be dealt with as close to its point of origin as possible to minimise use of fossil fuels and CO2 generation.
- **Exposure to dangerous emissions such as dioxins**
This is not the most compelling of arguments against such a plant. Technology is now advanced to such a degree that when it is functioning optimally the noxious emissions from an incinerator plant should be well under permitted levels. There is always the risk of accidents, however. The same cannot be said though of other techniques such as open-air composting, which does carry with it the risk of smell.
- **Proximity to wind turbines**
The closeness of two of the tallest turbines in Suffolk (for which planning permission has already been granted) to a 90-metre chimney has the potential of creating turbulence that could drag down the plume from EFW plant thereby spreading the emissions at a lower level in a much more localised area than intended. This factor was dismissed by the planners when the turbine application was considered, even though they were aware of the WCS and how close an incinerator might be.
- **Property values**
There is evidence to suggest that the blight of even the threat of a waste treatment plant depresses property values for some distance around the site. The actual existence of a plant would certainly do so.
- **Visual blight**
Eye Airfield is one of the most visually prominent sites in the county for such a plant. It is a relatively high point in an otherwise flat open landscape. There is no possibility whatsoever of screening such a structure, unlike the existing buildings on the airfield, most of which could be hidden, just like the gas pumping station, by intelligent planting.
- **Impact on heritage and tourism**
Our area has one of the densest distributions of important listed buildings. The attraction of visiting this part of Suffolk and its towns like Eye and even ones as distant as Debenham will be seriously diminished if it becomes the focus of the county's waste disposal. Tourism contributes to the national and local economy and is important to Suffolk.

