

## **Letter to Strategic Planning Committee**

Planning Application: Minerals and Waste WP/20/00692/DCC.

We, the undersigned representatives of Dorset's cultural sector wish to register our objection to the proposed waste incinerator in Castletown on the Isle of Portland.

Following our reading of the proposal we wish to indicate our concerns on the following grounds.

### **On environmental grounds**

- environmental impact including potentially conflicting with Dorset Council's environmental strategy and commitment to carbon reduction
- landscape - its impact on the local historic and natural environment, landscape character and flora and fauna
- air quality – there has been no consultation on the impact of the whole island topography and weather conditions causing eddies and turbulences, as well as cloud caps and inversion layers, on stack emissions dispersal.
- health - its potential impact on public health on Portland and more widely across South Dorset. As mentioned in objections raised by the local GP Primary Care Network
- traffic – the increase in HGV traffic and the lack of alternative access to the island which is already an issue and should not be further added to.
- economic impact -There has been no consultation done on the true economic impact on Portland. Assertions of benefits from the applicant relate to Portland Port and associated industries NOT the island (i.e. Cruise passengers do not spend money on Portland but are bused off the island to mainland attractions) Although there may be some jobs created during the construction phase of the project and some others when the plant is operational there is no guarantee that most of these jobs would be for local people and no consideration has been made of the detrimental economic impact to local geo-tourist development and associated jobs.

### **In addition**

Dorset Council has rightly declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency, as have Portland and Weymouth Town Councils. The geology of Portland dominates the ecology of the island with its limestone core and resulting calcareous grasslands flora and fauna. The local area is critical to the management of the marine environment, with designated sites such as the Chesil Beach & the Fleet Special Protection Area, Portland Harbour, and nearby Marine Conservation Zones.

The environmental and health impact has not been accurately modelled by the applicant, especially given the topography of the island, and the location relating to residential areas. The operation of the intended development will adversely impact amenity and air quality in the local area, potentially increasing illness and mortality associated with resultant increased pollution from the waste incinerator's emissions, despite claims that pollution will be within "prescribed limits". Even with Environmental Agency enforcement of emission limits there can be no certainty that there will not be occasions when the limits to pollution could be exceeded. This is the case, all too often, at other incinerator plants.

The independent environmental report commissioned and submitted by Portland Town Council sets out in greater detail with supporting evidence this public health and environmental case for the application being rejected.

The proposed development is seemingly at variance with the UK Government's commitment to reduce carbon emissions. It is claimed that the facility will become carbon neutral across its lifetime through offsetting and the purchase of carbon credits. The assertion that the further carbon emissions into the atmosphere could be mitigated with some tree planting is highly questionable not least because of the time it would take for any trees to mature, and there being no guarantee that these trees will be even planted or maintained.

### **On cultural grounds**

Arts and Culture attracts public funding and grant income to Portland as well as to the entire county of Dorset. Our industry creates jobs and provides training opportunities for young people and those seeking employment in the creative industries; one of the fastest growing industries in the UK, worth an estimated £10.47 billion to the UK economy in 2019 or 0.5% of the total economic output\*

Culture and the Arts promote health and wellbeing and consults, educates and seeks the expertise of county specialists to inform the public about Dorset's history, culture, and environment. We bring new and returning visitors to both Portland and more widely to Dorset and they subsequently contribute to the local economy through investment in accommodation, retail, and local goods and services.

We believe the waste incinerator has the potential to threaten the varied, environmentally sensitive and sustainable tourism opportunities Portland and Dorset has to offer visitors to our county and as significant contributors to the tourist economy, we therefore recognise the negative impact this will likely have to the cultural and tourism sector in South Dorset in particular.

Many of us within the creative industries here in Dorset contribute widely to widening conversation about the environment and our responsibility to protect vital natural resources and landscape along the Jurassic Coast, across the county and region and globally, through our creative and educative programmes or through our individual artworks. We are respected nationally as advancing the cause of environmental responsibility and sustainability through arts and cultural activity and training.

We are imaginative and we include in our skill set the ability to bring a variety of public voices together to find solutions to locally relevant issues that have globally relevant ramifications.

We believe Portland and Dorset has a future based on celebrating and enhancing this historic and beautiful landscape and that there are exciting alternative economic development and investment opportunities to explore.

We welcome the opportunity to work with Dorset Council, and the residents of Dorset to establish development strategies that respect health and environment and benefit everyone living in Dorset.

\*[Covid-19 and the arts and culture sectors - House of Commons Library \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/library/research-and-briefings/2020/01/2020-01-14-covid-19-and-the-arts-and-culture-sectors/)

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Dorset Art Weeks

Dorset Visual Arts

Eden Portland

Evolver – Wessex Arts & Culture Guide

Cleo Evans

Rosie Russell

Jem Main

Amanda

Wallwork

Sally Watkins

Molly Scarborough

Rocca Holly-Nambi

Sandy Kirkby