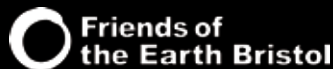


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IN THIS ISSUE: Incineration: a waste of good waste

Bristol airport expansion – the real fight starts now

As you will have seen in all the press recently, North Somerset Council has approved Bristol Airport's planning application.

We submitted really strong evidence in opposition to the application, but North Somerset councillors chose to ignore this, the 5,000 plus objections, opposition by both Bristol and B&NES councils, and the real impacts of the airport's expansion on local communities and the wider environment. It is clear that there is no current valid policy on which this decision was based, and it is open to challenge.

There are two things you could do that would really help. The first is we may need to build a war-chest to help fund a legal challenge. Any sum will help. The easiest way to do this is through the Paypal donation link on our website www.stopbia.com. You can also pay by cheque, made payable to "SBAE" and posted to Stop Bristol Airport Expansion, The Hub Bristol, 3rd Floor, Bush House, 72 Prince Street, Bristol BS1 4QD.

The second action is to push for the application to be called-in.

The application will now be referred to the Secretary of State due to the impacts on the green belt and climate change. He can either allow the council to go ahead and issue its decision or 'call in' the application and have a public inquiry. We are pushing hard for a 'call-in' and again urgently ask for your help.



It would really help us if you write to Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government at: psericpickles@communities.gsi.gov.uk, copied to David Jones, Planning Manager (Dorset & West of England), GOSW Planning & Housing Delivery Team at: david.jones@gosw.gsi.gov.uk

The subject line should read: Call in the Bristol Airport application for a public inquiry

In your letter, please state that you:

- Recognise that North Somerset have referred the plan to the Secretary of State because it encroaches on the Green Belt, and state that the airport have not proven exceptional circumstances for this to happen. Bristol airport plan to build a car park of 12.3 hectares that will also be highly visible from the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Support the request for the Secretary of State to exercise his call in powers due to issues related

Palm Oil Power at Avonmouth?

Gearing up for Round Two

Why would anyone build a 49 Megawatt Palm Oil powered electricity generation plant at Avonmouth? The company with the proposal, W4B, are sincere in their desire to do something useful, and think that producing electricity from vegetable oil is a "Good Thing", as the oil is biogenic in origin - so the electricity must be carbon neutral and "renewable".

Not so, of course - growing, refining and shipping the palm oil, and converting it to biodiesel for use in power generation causes emissions, not just of carbon dioxide, but methane as well, a far more potent climate change gas. And it requires an area one and a half times the size of Bristol to produce just about enough oil to supply only a fifth of Bristol's electricity.

There are massive greenhouse gas emissions from the deforestation required to make way for palm oil plantations: this deforestation also causes habitat loss, and displaces land that could be used to grow food.

Moreover, there are massive greenhouse gas emissions from the deforestation required to make way for palm oil plantations: this deforestation also causes habitat loss, and displaces land that could be used to grow food. Palm oil is so valuable, that the oil to make the electricity costs more than the value of the electricity produced - so government incentives, the so called 'Renewable Obligation Certificates' (ROCs), are, effectively, being used to pay for, and justify the deforestation! How's that, for bad biofuel lobbying, and sloppy government intervention, producing an almost perfectly wrong result?

Bristol's council leaders spoke out courageously against this project, and while two letters favoured the proposal, over four hundred were written opposing it. The council's own planners said these could be discounted, but noted that, the claim that the plant reduced emissions, was not based on proper calculations, that statutory reporting guidelines should have been followed (but weren't), and that the calculations should have been verified independently (but weren't). Then they said that this didn't matter anyway, as the emissions are irrelevant for planning purposes, and on balance recommended granting permission. But the council voted 6 to 2 against the proposal, mainly citing all the negative effects in the countries where palm oil is produced, and that overall lack of sustainability exhibited by the project.

The Environment Agency have helpfully issued their own view, which is that ROCs - the



subsidies - should NOT be paid for electricity generated from palm oil. They say that there would be significant emissions caused by the use of palm oil based bio-diesel; that there are better uses for the oil; and that more energy can be created by burning whole plant biomass than from just the refined crop. They conclude that controversy over palm power could damage the reputation of the wider bio-energy sector. Without the subsidies you'd think that would be the end of it. Wouldn't you?

Amazingly, W4B are appealing against the council's decision, so this is going to be a good test of the council's resolve, the Environment Agency's opinion, and the incoming government's green credentials. Bristol is determined to be a leading green capital - to reduce emissions faster than others, to create all our energy renewably, and to aim for 30% tree cover. A threat that increases emissions, is not at all renewable, and causes deforestation ought to be a clear enough challenge to trigger an immune response!

It would be far better if W4B's positive intent were channeled in the right direction: they have been offered the chance to join with Bristol's own plans for renewable energy. There's lots more that can be done with local resources in the local bioregion, with biofuels and biomass, which don't involve burning crops, and which would help build the local economy, actually sequester carbon, and help reduce dependence on fossil fuels. Surely that's the way forward? It's to be hoped that wisdom will prevail.

David Saunders

Bristol Airport expansion continued

to the national interest: specifically Climate Change, which North Somerset Council has not yet considered in full in relation to the recent Heathrow Court Ruling.

The decision taken by North Somerset has also omitted to take into consideration findings from the Committee on Climate Change and the true price of carbon.

- Support the call in due to the Heathrow Court Ruling and the devalued status of the 2003 White Paper.

In March the High Court ruled that plans to build a third runway at London's Heathrow airport must include issues relating to Climate change. Bristol Airport's expansion plans are based on the same out-of-date 2003 Air Transport White Paper used to justify Heathrow's third runway. However the High Court ruling showed that the Air Transport White Paper is no longer sufficient grounds to support expansion.

We believe that North Somerset Council has made a flawed decision based on the outdated 2003 Air Transport White Paper and the draft Regional Spatial Strategy which is no longer in use.

Please also add:

I request that there should be a moratorium on airport expansion until new policy developments on aviation are in place. These policies should take account of the latest findings on climate change and noise and health guidance from the World Health Organisation. The tourism deficit should also be included as a cost to the UK caused by aviation. There is so much conflicting evidence within policies surrounding airport expansion, there is no alternative but to call in this application.

The 2003 Air Transport White Paper has always been considered a flawed document, we need a new and policy that really works to deliver integrated transport within carbon budgets.

I urge you to 'call in' the Bristol Airport planning application.

Jeremy Birch



INCINERATION a waste of good waste

Viridor's application, to build a 500,000 tpa (tonnes per year) waste facility in Avonmouth, including a 350,000 tpa energy-from-waste-by-incineration plant was refused by Bristol City Council's Development Control North Committee on 2 June.

The vote was: 7 for refusal, plus one abstention. The full legal grounds for refusal will be drawn up by officers, but will be based around the concern that Viridor's plant would provide an over-concentration of similar waste facilities within the Avonmouth area, and that would in turn lead to problems with increased traffic, air pollution, etc.

It was interesting to hear that officers had discussed with Viridor the possibility of restricting the catchment area for waste brought in to their incinerator. Viridor were happy to agree to a restriction of the West of England + Somerset, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire (a 7-authority-wide area), but

they would not consider restricting their intake to the WoE alone...

In another move, Bristol City Council have made an objection to SITA's application to build an incinerator, (still in Avonmouth, but this time just over the border in South Gloucestershire), on two main grounds:

- (i) the proposed development does not significantly meet CHP (Combine Heat and

Bristol Friends of the Earth have objected to both incinerators, generally citing the Joint Core Waste Strategy, drawn up by the WoE Authorities.

SITA's application to build a 400,000 tpa energy-from-waste-by-incineration plant, may be heard by South Gloucestershire Council's Planning meeting at the end of June.

Power) recovery objectives which should be integral to the development;

- (ii) there was a lack of demonstrable need provided for the waste facility when considered cumulatively with the proposed Viridor scheme (within Bristol City Council administrative area), and that issues relating to traffic movements and wider environmental impact could not therefore be properly assessed.

SITA's application to build a 400,000 tpa energy-from-waste-by-incineration plant, may be heard by South Gloucestershire Council's Planning meeting at the end of June. Given that it has already been postponed from the March, April and May meetings, the hearing could well be delayed further, till July or August – so it's not too late to get in your objection.

Bristol Friends of the Earth have objected to both incinerators, generally citing the Joint Core Waste Strategy, drawn up by the West of England Authorities over the past 4 years. (The WoE comprises Bristol, Bath & North East Somerset, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset Councils.) In this document the WoE broadly identified the waste treatment capacity requirements for the region, up to and including 2026. This capacity would enable the region to become more self-sufficient. The Strategy allocates 390,000 tpa of new waste-processing sites to Avonmouth, where several waste plants have already been granted planning permission:

New Earth Solutions already have planning permission to build a 200,000 tpa MBT

(Mechanical Biological Treatment) plant in Avonmouth

Cyclamax have planning permission to create a 125,000 tpa MRF (Materials Recovery Facility) and gasification plant

Ethos Recycling, who operate the former Compact Power pyrolysis plant in Avonmouth, have planning permission to extend the capacity of its plant

If all of these facilities are built, alongside the 2 new incinerators, there will be a staggering 865,000 tonne over-capacity. This can only mean that waste will be imported into the region in order to keep the incinerators burning. The implications here are two fold: Either

Avonmouth becomes the South-West's dumping ground for waste

OR

Things that could be recycled will end up being burned, in order to keep the incinerators going in their 24/7-style operation

For more information about incineration please visit: www.bambi-network.org.uk/

Jane Stevenson

info@bristolfoe.org.uk

Voicemail: 0117 911 4084



Sims Hill Shared Harvest

For the past few months a diverse group has been working to develop central Bristol's first Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project. For those who are new to this concept, a CSA is a popular farming model where the members meet the running costs of the farm, and receive a fair share of the harvest in return. The budget for the farm, and what members contribute is negotiated, seeking to establish a fair, and transparent deal for all. This may, for example, include subsidized membership for members on low incomes.

There are a number of CSA's in the UK and overseas, which exhibit a diverse range of working models. Sims Hill Shared Harvest aims to launch a community-owned and led CSA, which will help to reclaim Bristol's historic (and fertile) agricultural land (sometimes known as the 'blue finger'). We are abiding by the principles of perma-culture and community development. Our mission is:

- Sims Hill Shared Harvest will provide its local members with quality fruit and vegetables, grown using natural farming methods
- Sims Hill welcomes the involvement of wider community, offering a unique opportunity to learn, work and play together
- Sims Hill exists to create a mutually enriching partnership between people and the land

Bristol City Council is supporting the project with a generous offer of land and we are now exploring rental and funding options for Sims Hill. We are also pursuing a Local Food Lottery funding bid with the Avon Wildlife Trust (who are running a sister project close by). The site has been worked as pasture for the last 30 years, but before that was just one of the many thriving market gardens that supplied food for the city. Sims Hill Shared Harvest is determined



to help bring this land back into active food production.

We are now beginning to look for potential members who will be added to our mailing list and kept up to date on our activities and the development of the project. If you are interested in becoming part of a dynamic and visionary new project please get in touch.

We will also be appearing at various local events throughout the summer and look forward to meeting you then.

James Adamson
simshillsharedharvest@googlemail.com.

<http://simshillsharedharvest.wordpress.com/2010/02/11/hello-world/>

As featured in a previous edition, Phil Haughton's local organic community vegetable farm is expanding and looking for new members.

See www.thecommunityfarm.co.uk

Bristol's Core Strategy

Bristol City Council's Core Strategy document was released this spring, to be followed by the Examination in Public, a detailed scrutiny of the policies. Bristol FoE exercised its opportunity to participate in the discussion by sending in a submission prior to the 15th January 2010 deadline.

BFoE's two main premises for suggesting the document is unsound are:

Not enough background research has been performed to indicate where sustainable energy installations could be sited. The implication here is that the final policy document has no site specific evidence to support wider use of renewable energy, should a developer challenge it.

The Council's Peak Oil Report (2009) recommends further assessment of quantities of land required for some urban food production.

Though there is much to commend the council for their intentions, they've had to weather the flood of new documents appearing at frequent intervals, featuring changes at national, and regional policy level. In common with many other councils, they have found that continuity is difficult to establish, which is symptomatic of government departments at national level that don't communicate with each other, but which publish policy papers covering the same topics. This will also be a challenge for the Inspector at the Public Examination.

The Council's Peak Oil Report (2009) recommends further assessment of quantities of land required for some urban food production.



One reassuring note is that Planning Inspectorate has picked up on the BCC Peak Oil Report and is asking pertinent questions.

So whilst our objective of influencing policy to deliver a healthier environment remain unchanged, there's still a lot of reading to do.

Anyone can attend the Public Examination hearings which are scheduled to run for several weeks and due to start from 21st June 2010 at the Council House

Helen Pillinger



About Bristol Friends of the Earth

Bristol Friends of the Earth is an active local group of the international environmental organisation Friends of the Earth. We currently run campaigns on local climate change, Bristol airport expansion, food, waste, local transport and sustainable housing. We hold a monthly group meeting (visit www.bristolfoe.org.uk for details) plus separate campaign meetings.

If you would like to know more about us, to help us by campaigning or raising money, or want to come to a meeting to see what we do then please get in touch. You can help by volunteering and giving your time, or by joining Bristol Friends of the Earth and helping us financially.

How do I join?

Membership of Bristol FoE includes a free subscription to InFoE. To join us, just complete

the form below, and return it to the Membership Secretary. Please pay by standing order if you can – it really helps to cut time spend on admin. Subscription rates are:

- Ordinary £15 Unwaged £5 Joint / Family £25

Contact us

Bristol Friends of the Earth
10–12 Picton Street, Montpelier, Bristol BS6 5QA
email: info@bristolfoe.org.uk
voicemail: 0117 911 4084

To join the Bristol Environment email list, which circulates local news of environmental events and campaigns, please email your name and email address to: bristol_environment@bristolfoe.org.uk

To find out about future events or our next monthly meeting visit www.bristolfoe.org.uk

Yes, I'd like to join my local group

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

I enclose £_____ membership and £_____ donation

TOTAL £_____

cheques payable to Bristol Friends of the Earth. OR:

I'd like to pay by standing order: _____

My bank _____

My bank's address _____

Postcode _____

My account no. _____

Sort code _____

Account name _____

Standing Order Instruction

Please pay the sum of £_____

on _____ / _____ / 20_____

and thereafter the same amount on the same day each month/year*

(*Delete as appropriate. Please make first payment date at least one month from when you fill in this form)

To Co-operative Bank plc, sort code: 08-90-02
Bristol Friends of the Earth, account no: 50296440

Signature _____

Date _____

Please return to: The Membership Secretary,
Bristol Friends of the Earth, 10–12 Picton Street,
Montpelier, Bristol BS6 5QA

Your records will be stored on our computer. If you have any objections to this, please contact us.