

# P-05-908 CF3 against the Incinerator

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 12 Mai 2020  
Petitions Committee | 12 May 2020

**Petition Number:** P-05-908

**Petition title:** CF3 against the Incinerator

**Text of petition:**

A new incinerator is planned to be built in CF3 on Newlands Road, Wentloog Cardiff. This is in very close proximity to homes & schools. For example it is only 500 meters away from Eastern High School. Many residences and other schools within the CF3 are also well within a 1/2-mile radius of it.

The planned incinerator will burn 200,000 tonnes of industrial waste per year and will operate 24/7. It is planned to be built as early as 2020/21.

The industrial waste to be burned will be transported to the planned site using 80 lorries everyday each carrying 20 tonnes of waste. The toxic ash generated by the incinerator will also need to be transported away.

The size of the planned site is 1.5 rugby pitches in size with the main building being over 40 meters in height and the chimney stack being over 70 meters in height. We believe this incinerator is not what residents of CF3 want in their community.

We believe this will generate noise, air pollution, traffic and will not be good for the health of those living in the CF3 community.

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# 1. Background

## Proposed development

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Môr Harfen Bio Power are proposing to build an Energy Recovery Facility on Newlands Road, Cardiff. Newlands Farm, 140m from the proposed site, is the nearest residential property. The nearest residential estate is approximately 500m to the north east of the site. The Eastern High School, Trowbridge Primary School and St John Lloyd R.C. Primary School are all within a kilometre of the proposed site. The facility would be situated in the Gwent Levels - Rumney and Peterstone Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The proposals are for a £150m energy-from-waste (EfW) facility which would incinerate 200,000 tonnes of commercial and industrial waste annually. This would generate 15 megawatts of electricity (MWe), enough energy to power approximately 30,000 homes per year.

In operation, it is estimated that there would be 116 vehicle movements per day between the hours of 6am and 6pm, Monday to Saturday (36 from cars and 80 from lorries). The incinerator would run 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The 1.67 hectare facility would have an expected lifespan of 25-30 years. The building itself would be 47m high, with a chimney reaching 70m in height. Under the plans, the project would take two years to build, and is estimated to provide 40 permanent jobs on completion.

## Planning process

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The proposals are currently at the pre-application stage. The first round (PDF, 131KB) of public consultation ended on 29 November 2019.

As the proposed facility would generate more than 10 MWe, it is designated as a Development of National Significance (DNS). As such, the Welsh Government is responsible for the planning decision, rather than the Local Planning Authority, Cardiff Council.

The facility would require an environmental permit from Natural Resources Wales (NRW). An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will need to be carried out and an Environmental Statement (ES) will need to accompany the planning application. The ES will include an assessment of the proposed facility's impacts in the following areas: air quality; noise and vibration; ecology; landscape and visual impact; transport; and flood consequences.

Further information on the planning process for a DNS can be found in "The Planning Series: 14 - Developments of National Significance" Research Service briefing. Môr Harfen Bio Power are intending to publish and consult (PDF, 131KB) on the draft planning application and associated ES in the coming months

## The energy-from-waste debate

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EfW facilities commonly burn waste that would otherwise go to landfill. The incineration process can reduce the volume of waste by up to 90%. The bottom ash produced in the incinerator can be processed and used in construction. However, it has been reported (PDF, 1.2MB) that even after treatment, bottom ash could still be toxic and negatively impact the environment.

Campaigners have stated that the emissions from EfW incinerators - including heavy metals, dioxins and particulate matter - pose a danger to human health. A Defra Waste Management Technology Brief (PDF, 1.2MB) states that modern facilities are able to filter flue gases before their release, removing these pollutants. This process results in Air Pollution Control (APC) residues, which are classed as a hazardous material.

Public Health England (PHE) commissioned a series of studies into the impacts of municipal waste incinerators (MWIs) on health. The studies found no evidence for increased risk of infant mortality for children living close to MWIs. PHE's position on MWIs is that:

... modern, well run and regulated municipal waste incinerators are not a significant risk to public health. While it is not possible to rule out adverse health effects from these incinerators completely, any potential effect for people living close by is likely to be very small.

Analysis from the campaign group UK Without Incineration Network (UKWIN) suggests that the amount of carbon dioxide produced per kWh of electricity generated in EfW facilities is greater than at natural gas power stations, and only slightly less than at coal powered stations.

However, Recycle for Wales state that a conventional EfW plant can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by between 32% and 41% when compared to sending waste to landfill. This is because landfill sites release methane as well as other environmental pollutants such as leachate.

Campaigners have suggested that incinerators can maintain incentives for waste production as they require a continuous supply of waste throughout their lifetime. Germany has started to import waste to maintain its incinerators after its recycling rate increased.

## 2. Welsh Government action

### Towards Zero Waste strategy

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Towards Zero Waste, published in 2010, sets out the Welsh Government's current strategy for waste management. By 2050 Wales aims to re-use or recycle all waste, without the need for any landfill or energy recovery. As such, the strategy states that:

This means there will be far less need for residual waste treatment facilities such as energy from waste plants with the number and/or capacity required progressively reducing from 2025 to 2050.

The strategy incorporates the waste hierarchy from the EU Waste Framework Directive. In the hierarchy, EfW recovery sits above landfill as a management option, although it comes below waste prevention, re-use and recycling.

The strategy does recognise the role of EfW in the short to medium term plans for sustainable waste management. It sets a target for 70% of waste to be recycled by 2025, with the remaining 30% of waste to be sent to high efficiency EfW facilities.

#### Circular economy consultation

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The Welsh Government is currently consulting on a new circular economy strategy.

The consultation document states that the Welsh Government will legislate to ensure key recyclables are banned from energy recovery and landfill. It also says that the Welsh Government will consult with the UK Government on whether an incineration tax would be desirable to increase recycling rates.

The consultation is open until 3 April 2020.

#### Minister's letter to Committee Chair

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The Minister for Housing and Local Government, Julie James, wrote to the Chair of the Assembly's Petitions Committee on 26 February.

She stated that the proposed facility would be a DNS. As such, the planning application would be made directly to her as the Minister with responsibility for planning decisions. She therefore declined to comment on the petition as doing so may prejudice any future decision on proposals.

### 3. National Assembly for Wales action

In June 2019 Russell George AM called for the Welsh Government to implement a moratorium on all new incinerators while a review is carried out ahead of the development of a new national waste strategy:

Having noted the lack of a national plan myself, I certainly feel that a moratorium on all applications for incinerators should be put in place when a full and detailed review is carried out ahead of a plan being developed.

In response, the Minister for Housing and Local Government, Julie James, did not address the request for a moratorium however commented on the Welsh Government's "Towards Zero Waste" strategy:

My colleague Hannah Blythyn is actually undertaking a review of our 'Towards Zero Waste' strategy with a view to looking again at the circular economy in Wales. [...] Certainly, the end disposal of any waste that's remaining will be part of that relook. Obviously, a circular economy wouldn't have any waste in it and so there'd be a falling need for end-of-life disposal of that sort. So, we will be looking again at our 'Towards Zero Waste' policy, with a view to implementing as much of a circular economy in Wales as possible..

Mike Hedges AM made a statement in Plenary in June 2019, calling on the Welsh Government to ban new incinerators for non-medical waste:

[...] Will the Minister, in conjunction with ministerial colleagues, consider the following: banning new incinerators except for medical incinerators to deal with pathogens [...]

The Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths, responded:

I'm certainly very happy to have those discussions with a range of ministerial colleagues. Clearly, air quality is a matter across Government, and it's certainly discussed in Cabinet. But I will look at all those issues and write to you further.

Russel George AM laid a written question in July 2019, asking about the role of incinerators in the Welsh Government's plans for a "Zero Waste" economy.

In response the Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Communities, Hannah Blythyn, said:

The Welsh Government's preferred solution for treating waste which cannot be recycled is to utilise high efficiency energy from waste facilities, as this also prevents this material from becoming a problem elsewhere. [...]

Energy recovery from waste has a role to play for non-recyclable waste, provided the facilities meet development planning and environmental permitting requirements.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.