



Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/02642/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

23 October 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 9 October 2020 which includes further information to supplement Petition “P-05-1040 Introduce a moratorium on the approval any new large scale waste incinerators in Wales”.

When the Welsh Ministers exercise a precautionary approach towards a certain category of development, notification directions are normally issued which require the referral of such planning applications to them for determination where Local Planning Authorities are minded not to refuse them. Waste to energy incinerators commonly have a generating capacity of above 10MW. As a consequence, planning applications for such developments are considered as Developments of National Significance (“DNS”) and are made directly to the Welsh Ministers, not requiring a referral.

Examination of DNS applications is undertaken by a Planning Inspector on behalf of the Welsh Ministers. The Planning Inspectorate operate to ensure a fair process for all parties. Decisions on such applications are made by the Welsh Ministers and there is a statutory requirement to have regard to the development plan, as well as other considerations material to the application. This includes current and extant policy, such as Planning Policy Wales (Edition 10) which sets out the waste policy and supports the decarbonisation pathway established in the Environment Act 2016.

It is vital we take responsibility for the disposal of the waste we generate which cannot be recycled. For this reason, the Welsh Government has invested in the infrastructure to extract electricity and heat from this material and dispose of it safely to the highest environmental standards and in line with the waste hierarchy. This not only ensures the maximum benefit can be extracted from this waste, but also prevents it from becoming a problem elsewhere.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Julie.James@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Julie.James@gov.Wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The incineration of waste for heat and power is, however, a transitional step. The Beyond Recycling consultation on a new circular economy strategy was clear the long-term solution is to keep resources in use for longer and reduce all waste. In the interim there is a need to deal effectively with non-recyclable waste in a way which prevents it from either polluting the environment or sees the problem being exported.

The letter makes specific reference to the Beyond Recycling consultation summary. Around 1,000 citizens and stakeholders attended events across the country and submitted responses. The Welsh Government has heard a variety of views and the summary seeks to capture many of these. This will be taken into consideration as part of the development of the final strategy document. The Welsh Government plan to issue a new circular economy strategy by the end of the year.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie James". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Julie James AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Housing and Local Government