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Weymouth and Melcombe Regis

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01305 239839

Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP
Deputy Prime Minister and
Secretary of State for Housing,
Communities and Local Government

08 November 2024

Sent via email:

PSAngelaRayner@communities.gov.uk

Dear Deputy Prime Minister,

Both Portland Town Council and Weymouth Town Council wish to express their concerns regarding the recent decision by the Government to grant planning permission for the incinerator at Portland Port. The Councils have objected to the proposal and remain vehemently opposed to any suggestion of the waste incinerator development proceeding.

We ask that the decision to grant planning permission is revisited after the Government have determined their national policy position on incinerators.

Furthermore, we call on the Government to impose a moratorium on the building of waste incinerators. We strongly encourage the Government to consider the precautionary principle regarding health and environmental risks, as required by the Interdepartmental Liaison Group on Risk Assessment (ILGRA).

Our residents have been left reeling by this decision. Many residents feel this is evidence of the views of locals, and the councils who represent them, being disregarded by Central Government. This echoes previous occurrences of local people being ignored for example during the siting of the Bibby Stockholm. Local people feel the Government has not listened to their concerns and are choosing instead to risk the health and wellbeing of local people. You will be aware of the key concerns, but to reiterate:

- The proposal is in the heart of the Jurassic Coast and will affect economic viability in the area and damage our reputation as a tourist destination of choice.

- The proposal does not comply with local plans including the Dorset Waste Plan 2019 West Dorset and 12 policies in the Weymouth and Portland Local Plan.
- The transport links are poor with only one road linking Portland to the mainland. This single road goes through small communities and past several schools and health care settings. The 160 HGV traffic movements a day will affect local air quality and compound existing congestion. There are also no plans for what will happen to waste and HGVs when Portland Beach Road is closed by traffic incidents or bad weather.
- Emissions will be blown across Weymouth by the prevailing winds affecting people's health, particularly the health of children, and those with existing conditions such as asthma or COPD.
- The top of the chimney is below the level of many nearby houses on Portland and an HM Young Offenders centre allowing pollutants to easily affect local residents. This is not usual for such chimneys where the height takes pollutants well above local dwellings
- Airbourne pollutants and uncontained waste ash will not only effect air quality, but water quality also putting local shellfish beds, sea grass and protected species such as the Portland Port seahorses at risk, and ultimately humans from bioaccumulation.

We fully support the following points made by Dorset Council Leader, Cllr Nick Ireland in his letter to you dated 21 October 2024, including:

- The recent BBC analysis on the burning of household waste in large incinerators signified that it is now the dirtiest way that the UK generates power. Given that, as a nation, we have binding emissions targets, coupled with our own ambitious plans to decarbonise Dorset, this feels like a retrograde step of monumental proportions.
- We can understand the commitment to unlock investment, create jobs and to kickstart the economy which has been well trailed by the government as a key priority. However, we would question the number of jobs that this incinerator will create, and additionally the potential impact on tourism and our wider environment will almost certainly offset any direct employment. The whole decision feels forced, ill-thought through and is one of a number of recent decisions by government that seem to ignore the needs and requirements of the residents of Portland and Weymouth.

Both Portland Town Council and Weymouth Town Council confirm their commitment to opposing the incinerator plans for environmental, economic, aesthetic, and health reasons.

We would welcome the opportunity to talk in more detail regarding this matter. The proposed waste incinerator is a key local issue for our residents, it risks negatively impacting their health, their environment and their economic prosperity for years to come

Yours sincerely,

Jon Orrell

Cllr Jon Orrell
Mayor of Weymouth

Sue Cocking

Cllr Sue Cocking
Chair of Portland Town Council

David Harris

Cllr David Harris
Leader – Weymouth Town Council

Matt Bell

Cllr Matt Bell
Chair of the Environment and
Services Committee – Weymouth
Town Council