

Dear Councillor

I am writing on behalf of STIFLE, the action group set up by concerned residents on both sides of the Tamar who are very concerned at the proposals of the South West Devon Waste Partnership, to use the greenfield site on Ernesettle Lane for waste management purposes.

We have sent the following information to Mrs Pengelly, leader of Plymouth City Council, and wish to ensure that all councillors in the three local authorities involved in the Waste Partnership also have this information. Even if you are not in the working party for this project, we feel that this is a very important long-term issue for residents of Devon county and all councillors need to be aware of the implications.

As we hope you are aware, we are a group whose primary interests lie in protecting an environmentally sensitive and locally valued area adjacent to Ernesettle Lane from development as a waste site of any type. However, as we have investigated the situation further we and many of our fellow citizens have become increasingly concerned over the intention of the Waste Partnership to adopt an incinerator-directed approach. There is now well researched scientific opinion over the dangers that waste incineration can offer – we have attached a copy of recent information from the well-respected British Society for Ecological Medicine, which refutes the latest statement from the Health Protection Agency. We urge you to read the comments the paper raises. We hope you will agree that the serious concerns of this august body of health professionals should not be ignored. You must be aware that, as a councillor, you will be directly responsible for decisions you take that could adversely affect the health of Plymouth's citizens.

We have also noted that in the Herald of 9 December, you have pledged that Plymouth's carbon footprint will be reduced by 60% by 2020. We applaud this aim, and would point out that this surely cannot be achieved by the building of a large waste incinerator in the city, with the requirement to keep feeding it with 240,000 tonnes of waste per year. Even allowing for an increasing local population, such a policy will require recycling levels to be kept relatively low to ensure sufficient incinerator-directed waste – and at a time when many factors are combining to reduce waste arisings, e.g. industry is now working towards more environmentally-friendly practices which could dramatically change the waste landscape during the life of a proposed incinerator.

Surrey County Council recently announced the scrapping of plans for two waste incinerators. Council leader, Andrew Povey is quoted as saying "It's a recognition that we have moved on, the technology has moved on, people are recycling more, the more we are recycling the more we avoid landfill." The amount of waste being recycled across Surrey has reached 40%. The council has set a target of 70%, which it aims to achieve by recycling credit incentives. Their's is not an isolated view and authorities around the world are developing similar approaches.

On Saturday 23 January the Zero Waste Alliance UK is holding a meeting at Greenpeace's UK Offices at Cantonbury Villas, London, N1 2PN. If the three councils involved in the South West Devon Waste Partnership were to send representatives to this meeting, this would surely indicate a sincere interest in finding the most appropriate, environmentally-acceptable solution to the City and County's waste problems? If investment could be put into businesses that focus on recycling and re-use this would create far more jobs than incineration and raise Plymouth's credentials as a forward-looking city.

Yours sincerely

Geraldine Lane  
Chair, STIFLE

On behalf of the STIFLE Steering group (Geraldine Lane, Neil Mawdsley, Clare Gibson, Alison Sargent, Joe Ellison, Olive Eggleston, Clare Gibson, Martyn Gimblett, Geoff Hillier, Jan Jackson, Stuart Lane)

Copies to: all Devon MPs, Colin Breed, MP, Plymouth, Devon and Torbay Councillors, Mark Turner, Keith Rossiter (Plymouth Herald)