



## **CORNWALL ENERGY RECOVERY CENTRE (CERC) APPEAL**

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

#### **WHAT IS THE CORNWALL ENERGY RECOVERY CENTRE (CERC)?**

The Cornwall Energy Recovery Centre is a modern state-of-the-art energy-from-waste facility that will burn residual municipal waste that arises in Cornwall thereby diverting it away from landfill and producing an equivalent amount of electricity for around 21,000 homes. It will also supply heat created during the process to local industry.

Cornwall Council and SITA Cornwall make great efforts to increase recycling and the county already has a recycling rate of around 38 per cent. However, a significant proportion of waste is not reused or recycled and is currently sent to landfill.

The Cornwall Energy Recovery Centre (CERC) would play an important role in disposing of the county's non-recycled residual waste by burning it under controlled conditions to provide an important source of energy in the form of electricity and heat. A valuable means of helping the Council avoid high landfill taxes and fines, the CERC would also contribute to reducing dependency on fossil fuels to generate our electricity and help overcome the looming energy gap.

Managing this residual waste currently costs Cornwall a large amount of money and landfill tax is set to rise dramatically in the coming years; £48 per tonne from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 rising to £72 in 2013. If waste continues to be sent to landfill then Cornwall would face a multi-million pound bill and this could have a significant impact on council services and on people across the county including industry.

The CERC is the preferred solution to this problem and was selected by Cornwall County Council in 2006 after an extensive evaluation process.

It will conform to extremely tight environmental standards to minimise any impact upon the local environment or communities.



The CERC proposals are in accordance with local, regional and national policies. The CERC site is near St Dennis, close to the A30, in central Cornwall, making it conveniently located to receive waste from across the county.

### **WHY DOES CORNWALL NEED IT?**

Cornwall is facing an impending waste crisis, with landfill tax placing an increasing financial burden on Cornwall's taxpayers and availability of suitable landfill sites rapidly running out. It is vital that the residual household waste, which Cornwall produces but which is not reused or recycled, can be managed effectively for the good of the whole county.

The CERC would represent an efficient, environmentally responsible and deliverable solution to Cornwall's waste crisis. It would play an important role in an overall waste strategy which aims to reduce the amount of waste produced, recycle as much as possible and put any remaining waste to good use.

### **WHY DID YOU PROPOSE TO BUILD IT AT ST DENNIS – ISN'T THERE A BETTER SITE IN CORNWALL?**

The site near St Dennis was selected by Cornwall County Council in accordance with the Waste Local Plan, and was evaluated against other sites using several criteria including access, availability, landscape and visual impacts and ecology. As a result, this site was chosen due to a number of factors, including:

- Good access to the road network
- Access to rail, should there be potential to transport waste by rail in the future
- Close to the National Grid (so that electricity can be exported to the National Grid)
- Close to an industrial user of heat (to use the heat that is exported from the CERC)
- It is large enough for ash to be treated on-site



### **THE COUNCIL TURNED DOWN THE ORIGINAL APPLICATION, WHY ARE YOU APPEALING IT?**

There is a pressing need for the CERC in order to avoid the looming waste management crisis which Cornwall faces. A successful appeal provides the greatest chance of delivering this much needed facility.

The CERC is very clearly a local issue however it also has national significance. If the UK is to hit targets to divert waste away from landfill and meet climate change commitments, new waste infrastructure that puts waste to good use is desperately needed.

The decision on whether or not the CERC will be granted planning permission will be made by the Secretary of State who will be guided by the advice of a Planning Inspector who is an impartial expert. The Inspector will conduct an extensive investigation of the issues surrounding the CERC and will coordinate a local Public Inquiry.

### **IF THE CERC IS PROPOSED TO HELP THE COUNCIL WITH ITS WASTE ISSUES AND THEY AGREED TO YOU SUBMITTING AN APPEAL, WHY DO THEY OPPOSE IT?**

It is common for local planning authorities to assess applications, in which the Council also has an interest. The planning authority must act independently and determine the application based upon the relevant local and national planning policies.

In the case of the CERC, it was the planning committee of the former Cornwall County Council that refused planning permission in March 2009, in spite of the fact that the same authority selected the CERC as part of its integrated waste management strategy.

Since the decision will now be made by the Secretary of State, Cornwall Council's planning authority will have to justify and defend its decision not to grant permission.



### **WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU DON'T GET PERMISSION TO BUILD IT?**

We are extremely hopeful that the CERC will be granted planning permission because it is a responsible proposal and is urgently needed to help overcome Cornwall's impending waste crisis. If permission were not granted then we would have to continue landfilling waste, which is a less effective and potentially more environmentally damaging way of dealing with Cornwall's waste.

Cornwall depends on two landfills, United Mines and Connon Bridge one of which, United Mines, will close in October of this year, 2010. Without the CERC, Connon Bridge's remaining consented capacity will be exhausted by 2014. Even if the consent was extended, without the CERC, the landfill would be exhausted by 2017 at the very latest based upon the current level of waste inputs.

Once there is no more landfill available, the only viable option will be to haul the waste to the next closest landfill site out of county. Transporting Cornwall's waste further afield would clearly have detrimental transport impacts on the County's roads, significant adverse environmental impacts and a dramatic increase in cost for the taxpayers of Cornwall.

### **HOW DOES THE APPEAL PROCESS WORK?**

The appeal is overseen by a Planning Inspector, who is an impartial expert. He or she will assess the application for the CERC against local, regional and national policies, giving extensive consideration to the issues raised by the project.

The Planning Inspector will coordinate a public inquiry where he will listen to evidence from various interested parties, including members of the public, to help inform his report.

Once the inspector has come to a conclusion, he will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State will make the final decision guided by the findings of the Planning Inspector and will consider all evidence from the Public Inquiry. The involvement of the Secretary of State adds an extra level of scrutiny of the decision and reflects what an important issue waste management is nationally, as well as for Cornwall.



Information about the planning appeal process and how to take part in the Public Inquiry is available from the Government's Planning Portal and from the Planning Inspectorate's websites.

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/public/planning/appeals/guidance>

[http://www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk/pins/appeals/planning\\_appeals/making\\_planning\\_appeal.htm](http://www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk/pins/appeals/planning_appeals/making_planning_appeal.htm)