

**Presentation to County Council Planning Committee Thursday Feb 4<sup>th</sup> 2010 by Cllr Brendan McKeown, Chairman, Hixon Parish Council, on behalf of 724 objectors.**

- 1. This report before members is fundamentally flawed, it is heavily biased, has factual inaccuracies and is peppered with anomalies.**
- 2. I'll highlight just one inaccuracy on the very first page (page 5 of the agenda) point 1.3.**
- 3. The size of the primary treatment buildings are mysteriously quoted as 14m wide when in fact they are 24m wide- a 40% understatement of the true size!**
- 4. The same mistake was made on the Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> agenda to this committee**
- 5. The officer report has been prepared with only one objective in mind;**
- 6. To persuade council members to agree with the recommendation to approve this application**
- 7. Every statement and report submitted by the applicants has been taken on face value, no questioning, no checking, no scrutiny**
- 8. By contrast, objectors have largely been dismissed, ignored or treated with barely disguised irritation**

- 9. Mr Chairman the main policy that has been used to justify the recommendation to approve this application is Waste**
- 10. In fact the word 'waste' features 133 times in the 25 pages of the report**
- 11. However, the term 'visual intrusion' to describe how a huge building might appear in an otherwise flat landscape does not feature anywhere**
- 12. But let's consider the 'waste' issue**
- 13. It is blatantly obvious the authors of this report have great difficulty in understanding the difference between In-Building Waste composting (what the applicant has applied for) and In-Vessel waste composting.**
- 14. The Waste Policy Officer refers to the desire for more In-vessel waste composting in Staffordshire (page 10 point 5.5)**
- 15. But there is no justification for this statement in the report**
- 16. Planning committee members now know, after their visit to Etwall, that there is a significant difference between In-Building and In-Vessel Waste composting**
- 17. In-vessel is a much more efficient, reliable and compact process compared to the dinosaur process proposed in Hixon**

- 18. For all the use the Etwall visit was to members, they might as well have gone to a biscuit factory!**
- 19. And let me just add another glaring inaccuracy in the report. On page 6 point 2.1 the site of the proposed factory is said to be south east of the village of Hixon**
- 20. In actual fact the site is north west of Hixon which means prevailing winds will carry odours and other emissions right into the heart of the village.**
- 21. Chairman, if this were a financial statement, it wouldn't get past page 1**
- 22. The application documents refer to a site in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire as a role model for this application**
- 23. You might think that this would be an important item of information for planning officers here in Stafford to follow up**
- 24. But when we rang officers just last week to confirm the actual location of the Huntingdon site, they didn't know where it was.**
- 25. No-one had checked if the site actually exists or whether there are any issues we should know about. All it needed was a phone call.**
- 26. Well, we have contacted Cambridgeshire County Council and the reassuring news is that site does exist**
- 27. And it is presently an In-Building waste composting factory**

- 28. But there, any similarity with the Hixon proposal ends**
- 29. The nearest housing to the Huntingdon site is over half a mile distant (save for the site managers house)**
- 30. and the A14 and A1 trunk roads separate the waste site from any housing**
- 31. The site manager admits they do have complaints of bad odours from over half a mile away .....**
- 32. Especially in Spring and Summer**
- 33. He says the problem of controlling odours has got more difficult since the introduction of bi-weekly municipal waste collection.**
- 34. The Huntingdon In-Building waste factory was opened 4 years ago to deal with locally-generated waste from Huntingdon**
- 35. Within the next two years it will be rebuilt as custom-designed In-Vessel waste composting plant**
- 36. The reason? because beyond 2014 In-Building waste technology will meet its limits and will not be capable of meeting national recovery targets**
- 37. Cambridgeshire has an eye to the future**
- 38. Staffordshire could be looking over it shoulder**
- 39. In Cambridgeshire they say major waste sites should be located in close proximity to large urban population**

40. **Hixon is 8 Stafford, 7 miles from Rugeley, 9 miles from Uttoxeter and 10 miles from Stone**

### **Summary**

- **Mr Chairman, Members, if this application is approved today, it will send the message that Staffordshire County Council is**
- **More concerned with hitting targets than it is concerned with listening to the concerns of the people of Staffordshire**
- **More keen to tick boxes than it is to properly check and scrutinise planning applications**
- **And more willing to be led rather than wanting to be a leader in the field of waste treatment**
- **This is the wrong process, in the wrong building, in the wrong place at the wrong time**
- **But if members are minded to refuse this application today**
- **They should not be accused as being anti-environment, anti-green policies, anti-saving the planet or anti-recycling.....**
- **In fact members will be saying**
- **“Actually I take very seriously the issue how we treat green waste and food waste**
- **“And I will not be bamboozled or hoodwinked into making a bad decision based on very bad information.”**