

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Town and Country Planning Appeals (Determination by Inspectors) (Inquiry procedure) (England) Rules 2000



Proposed development	Construction of an Energy Recovery Facility
PINS reference	APP/D1265/W/23/3327692
LPA reference	WP/20/00692/DCC
Site Address	Portland Port, Castletown, Portland, DT5 1PP
Local planning authority	Dorset Council
Appellant	Powerfuel Portland LTD

THE PORTLAND ASSOCIATION

**RULE 6 SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE:
TRAFFIC, AMENITY AND SOCIO-ECONOMICS**

DEBBIE TULETT

7 NOVEMBER 2023

1. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 1.1. My name is Debbie Tulett. I have lived in Dorset for over 40 years, and on Portland for 5 years. Three of my children live in Dorset too. I live in the Underhill ward and am familiar with the location of the proposal and the surrounding area.
- 1.2. I am on The Portland Association Committee and have been involved in contesting this planning application since November 2019. I am giving evidence as a witness on behalf of The Portland Association as its Research Officer (a voluntary role), having spent the last 4 years working full-time on researching the impacts of the Appellant's proposal.
- 1.3. This evidence considers the impacts of the proposed Energy Recovery Facility ("ERF") on (a) the amenity and quality of life of local residents and (b) the local economy. In my evidence, I deal with matters pertaining to certain policies of the Dorset Waste Plan 2019, as well as other local planning policies. The evidence I have prepared and provided for this appeal in this Proof of Evidence is true and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true opinion.

2. TRAFFIC, AMENITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Transport and access

- 2.1. The ERF would have adverse impacts on the safety, capacity and use of the local road network. It would not provide safe access to the proposed site. The Appellant has not demonstrated adequately that the channeling of HGVs through a high-density outdoor leisure area, which is used for both residents and tourists, would be safe. There is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the ERF would not result in an unacceptably high increase in congestion levels.

Traffic and amenity

- 2.2. The residents of Castletown would be impacted by HGVs passing through residential roads on a 24/7 basis. The HGVs will pass by residential properties emitting airborne toxins, dust and odours. Due to the constant hum of the ERF and rumble of the HGV lorries there would be reduced quiet enjoyment by existing or future residents if the proposal is approved. Castletown is a conservation area, and it would feel the impact of 80 extra HGV movements daily. A continuous supply of waste lorries driving past is not in keeping with the character of a conservation area, nor the amenity of the area, and it certainly would not enable the quiet enjoyment of these residential properties.
- 2.3. The ERF would also have an impact on the operation of emergency services. And the Appellant has not taken the impact of Bibby Stockholm into consideration.

Visual amenity

- 2.4. Although the full visual effects of the ERF are considered in the Rule 6's Landscape Proof, it is important to note that the ERF and stack would be very visible from important locations and that this would have a negative impact on local residents and businesses.
- 2.5. The lighting on top of the stack, in particular, would create light pollution and be highly visible. This would affect the visual amenity in the area and be a reminder to residents, businesses and visitors of the presence of the stack and its unsightly plume.

3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF THE ERF

Tourism and leisure

- 3.1. Tourism and leisure are important parts of Portland's local economy. Planning policy also recognises the importance of tourism and leisure in Portland. However, the ERF has the potential to harm Portland's tourism and leisure industry and undermine its potential for growth in this area. The proposed ERF's mass and scale would be incongruous with Portland's landscape and would impact upon the unique character of our island as well as our outdoor leisure activities. And the landscape and heritage impacts of the ERF – for example, its harm to the distinctive wedge-like nature of the island – would undoubtedly affect tourism within Portland.
- 3.2. There is the potential for a loss of jobs in the area during construction, due to the loss of visitor numbers to Portland during this period, as the ERF would be built adjacent to a tourist accommodation area, which would not be conducive to attracting visitors to accommodation and leisure activities within a construction site access area.
- 3.3. The ERF would overshadow the marine recreational area of Portland Harbour, which hosted the 2012 Olympics Sailing event. An ERF at this location would have a negative impact on our Olympic legacy especially around water sport and outdoor activity. An ERF at this site would also not be conducive to attracting activity-holidays and adventure-seekers, which is seen as a growth sector in the Neighbourhood Plan. These concerns are shared widely by local businesses and residents.

Benefits of and need for the ERF

- 3.4. The Appellant overstates the economic benefits of the ERF. There is no evidence that the visiting of Portland by cruise ships would decline if new onshore power connections were not provided. Cruise operators have not provided any certainty that they would even use the onshore power connections that would be provided.
- 3.5. There is also evidence that cruise ships do not tend to use onshore power connections where available. As such, even if onshore power were made available, it might not be taken up. Portland would remain an attractive destination for cruise ships without the provision of onshore power. In fact, it is unrealistic to think that cruise ships would base their itineraries around onshore power provision.

- 3.6. Although the ERF would create some jobs, it would lock 2.14 hectares of employment land into an industrial plant that only offers 30 permanent jobs. There would be no future employment growth potential for 30 or more years. This would reduce the areas of potential future employment growth in Portland Port. Landfill and incineration offer the worst prospects for future growth in the waste sector: this is a further reason why the ERF's "economic benefits" are more muted than the Appellant acknowledges.

Impact on tourism along the Jurassic Coast

- 3.7. The Jurassic Coast Partnership Plan indicates how important the World Heritage Site is to the local economy. Although the location of the proposed site itself sits just outside the boundaries of the WHS, due to the lay of the land, the proposed site would have an impact on those visitors and residents who enjoy the natural beauty and heritage features of the Isle of Portland and therefore have an impact on the appreciation of the WHS itself. The importance of tourism in relation to the Jurassic Coast was considered by the Secretary of State in the Navitus Bay Wind Park decision, which should be followed in this case.

Deprivation

- 3.8. Portland falls into the lower scale on the deprivation index on almost every metric other than "living environment". It falls within the 10% most deprived places in the UK. Portland's main assets are its landscapes and seascapes: they are the one thing that Portland has going for it. Harming these assets would be catastrophic in an area that is trying to regenerate itself against a history of very hard economic and social times.
- 3.9. The overall appearance of the ERF would make the area look very industrial. Visual amenity, landscape and seascape are important to the people of Portland who have spent over 25 years trying to move away from being considered a bleak and run down place since 1997 when the navy left, by enhancing the unique character of the island in terms of its built and natural assets. This proposal would negate the hard work undertaken to regenerate the Castletown Conservation Area into the current thriving tourist and outdoor leisure activity hotspot that it has become.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1. The ERF would undermine the Local Plan's description of Portland as "*a great place to live, work and visit*". The ERF would have a detrimental impact on local amenity and would result in negative socio-economic impacts.