

STATES OF JERSEY



SOLID WASTE STRATEGY (P.95/2005): SECOND AMENDMENTS (P.95/2005 AMD.(2))– COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 5th July 2005
by the Health and Social Services Committee**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

(1) The Amendment proposes that the new energy from waste (EFW) facility be located at La Collette.

The Health and Social Services Committee would wish to see a commitment that any provision of an Energy from Waste facility should be located away from Bellozanne due to the close proximity of the plant to significant residential accommodation and educational establishments. The whole process results in significant pollution issues some of which have been the subject of complaint to the Health Protection Department (and formerly Environmental Health Department). The pollution problem is not confined to incinerator plant emissions. Very significant vehicle movements to and from the plant lead to grit, dust, fumes and noise. Odours and the activities of vermin such as gulls at the existing site are also very undesirable in a densely populated area.

The use of La Collette as a potential site has distinct health protection advantages in that vehicle movements in the vicinity are away from residential accommodation and any emissions from the associated chimney stack are more likely to ground at sea than on nearby schools and residential accommodation. However, La Collette is poorly served by current road systems, there is already significant traffic activity at La Collette and no commitment has been made through an agreed States Mineral Strategy on the siting of the port facility for the import of construction aggregates once the existing quarries have been worked out and sand extraction reaches the end of its viability. The previous draft Mineral Strategy made provision for the port to be provided at La Collette which would result in a very significant level of heavy goods traffic in this same vicinity. Clearly this additional activity is of serious concern so the required road infrastructure must be addressed before any further major industrial activities are sited in this area.

The Health and Social Services Committee is minded to support the Amendment with the proviso that the longer term use of La Collette, particularly with regard to the siting of any minerals plant, is properly planned and provided for at the earliest opportunity.

(2) That residents of Bellozanne should be offered health screening similar to that available currently to Environment and Public Services staff operating the existing Bellozanne energy from waste plant, until the commissioning of the new energy from waste plant.

The Health and Social Services Committee is committed to the replacement of the existing Bellozanne plant at the earliest opportunity to protect Islanders from the current unsatisfactory emission of pollution from the existing chimney stack, and from fugitive emissions and noise from the plant including those associated with traffic movements in the local area.

The difficulty is that the amendment is too specific in referring to a screening programme similar to that presently carried out on staff at the plant. If a screening programme for pollution in the area population were to be offered to the public, there may be valid methodological reasons for adopting a different approach to that used to monitor workers.

The monitoring of local populations is not presently recommended by U.K. National Agencies such as the Health Protection Agency and leading academic figures, as adverse health effects are not generally observed in populations living next to municipal solid waste management facilities: exposure to the substances emitted from these premises are presently thought to be too low for significant adverse health effects to be observed in the field. Furthermore any results are likely to be confounded by other exposures such as to lead paint in the premises, or smoking, either active or passive, or other sources of pollution from recreational activity.

Any scientifically valid survey of the area population would need to test a significant number of individuals in order to gain a valid sample size. This of course may prove very difficult as people would only be tested on a voluntary basis. Additionally the cost of monitoring the population is likely to be extensive, and its worth may be of limited value for the reasons described above. The presence of raised chemical levels widely in the population would confirm that local people are exposed to some sort of pollution, not necessarily the incinerator. Even if attributed to the incinerator, this would only confirm the need to stop using the current incinerator as soon as possible: something that we know already and that is widely if not universally accepted and a main ambition of

the Committee.

If the States were minded to support further investigations the Committee would recommend beginning with a survey of households in the area to determine whether there was a perceived reduction in health and wellbeing amongst residents before committing to any further work. This work would be required in due course should Bellozane become the site for a new plant as the work would feature as part of the agreed Health Impact Assessment. Before screening any volunteer individuals, the department would need to take advice from the relevant U.K. agencies and clinical experts in order to determine the value of testing and the appropriate methodology. The amendment as worded is too narrowly prescriptive and the approach it suggests is too methodologically simplistic.

The Health and Social Services Committee does not support this Amendment, but the department will be willing to discuss screening with individuals who are referred after discussions with their GPs.