

Tuesday, July 22, 2008

## **Incinerator plan raises pollution and traffic fears**

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AN INCINERATOR which is proposed for the Rathcoole area of south Co Dublin has become the subject of significant protest and criticism among local residents.

An application was lodged with An Bord Pleanála last May by a US company, Energy Answers International.

It is seeking permission to construct the facility at a place known locally as Behan's Quarry, close to the main Naas Road/N7 motorway.

The planning application comes under the Strategic Infrastructure Bill 2006 which enables the fast-tracking of planning applications for projects deemed to be of a particular infrastructural significance, and as such bypasses any requirement to go through the local council's planning procedure.

The proposal has met with criticism from South Dublin County Council, and was strongly opposed at last week's council meeting, according to Cllr John Hannon (FF), who said there was a broad cross-party objection to the proposal.

Martin Judge from the council's planning department said they have undertaken a study of the likely effects of the incinerator, and the subsequent report unequivocally advised against any support for such a facility.

He said "the council has submitted objections to the planning application on the basis that the proposal does not comply with the Dublin regional waste management plan, and also because of concerns over the expected traffic problems which will be generated by the facility".

Local objections in Rathcoole are being led by a group called Rathcoole Against Incinerator Dioxins (Raid), which has held a series of public meetings in the area in the past few weeks.

Liam McDermott, secretary of Raid, said "our information is that the emissions likely to come out of this facility represent a danger to thousands of people in the surrounding area when the prevailing wind distributes them".

He said "the local environment for miles around will be polluted consistently for years".

"It should be considered that this area includes an equine industry worth in excess of €1 billion per year, as well as the Poulaphouca reservoir which is only six miles away from the site," he said.

Ted Walsh, one of the leading horse trainers in Ireland, has his business located within four miles of the proposed incinerator site, and has also objected strongly to the planning application.

He said an incinerator in that location, with the winds blowing in every direction, is likely to spread ash across the countryside and affect the quality of grazing for horses.

"Obviously, the effects on people is the most important thing, but Kildare is a great county for horses, with studs and farms that have produced Grand National and Gold Cup winners, and to have something like this built a few miles up the road would be a disaster."

Gerry O'Sullivan of Energy Answers International said the proposed facility was of huge importance and "would be capable of handling 365,000 tonnes of residual municipal waste per year, and would produce enough energy to power over 43,000 homes in the Dublin area".

He said Energy Answers International believed there was no basis to concerns over a significant increase in traffic in the area.

"The facility would be constructed within the quarry site, selected as the most appropriate location because it is close to existing waste-management infrastructure and transport routes," he said.

"It will have a dedicated exit from the N7, and as far as we are concerned there are no significant implications for local traffic in the area."

Mr O'Sullivan said "Energy Answers International has an open office on this matter, and is happy to discuss the matter and allay any concerns".

Tomorrow is the last day for objections to the planning permission application with An Bord Pleanála.

A final decision is expected towards the end of this year.

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