

Planning Application 12/0008/STMAJW.

Proposed development of an Energy from Waste (EfW) facility for the combustion of non-hazardous waste and the generation of energy, comprising the main EfW facility, a Bottom Ash processing facility and Education/Visitor Centre, together with Associated/Ancillary Infrastructure including Access Roads, Weighbridges, Fencing/Gates, Lighting, Emissions Stack, Surface Water Drainage Basins and Landscaping.

Land at Javelin Park, Bath Road, Haresfield, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire.

Comments of the Cotswolds Conservation Board

1. The Cotswolds Conservation Board ('the Board') was established by Parliament in 2004.

The Board has two statutory purposes¹:

- a) to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB; and
- b) To increase the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the AONB.

In fulfilling these roles, the Board has a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of people living in the AONB.

2. The Board has been mindful of the following National and Local planning policies when considering these applications:

National Planning Policy Framework; Paragraph 17 requires that the "intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside should be recognised"

Policy 26 of the Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan relating to AONBs has not been "saved". However it is stated on the Councils website that *"Whilst the deleted policies no longer form part of the 'development plan', the Council has sought legal opinion and has been advised that these may be a material consideration (where appropriate) in the determination of planning applications in the absence of new style plans."*

**POLICY 26 - AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
PROPOSALS FOR WASTE DEVELOPMENT WITHIN AREAS OF OUTSTANDING
NATURAL BEAUTY, AND/OR ADVERSELY AFFECTING THE NATURAL
BEAUTY OF THEIR LANDSCAPE SETTING, WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED
WHERE:**

- IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED TO BE THE BEST PRACTICABLE ENVIRONMENTAL OPTION; AND
- THERE IS A LACK OF ALTERNATIVE SITES; AND
- THERE IS A PROVEN NATIONAL INTEREST; AND
- THE IMPACT ON THE SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE AONB CAN BE MITIGATED.

Stroud Local Plan: POLICY NE8:

¹ Section 87, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Within the Cotswolds AONB, priority will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape over other considerations, whilst also having regard to the economic and social well-being of the AONB. Development within or affecting the setting of the AONB will only be permitted if all the following criteria are met:

- 1. the nature, siting and scale are sympathetic to the landscape;*
- 2. The design and materials complement the character of the area; and*
- 3. Important landscape features and trees are retained and appropriate landscaping measures are undertaken.*

Major development will not be permitted unless it is demonstrated to be in the national interest and that there is a lack of alternative sites.

3. It should be noted that this policy does not only relate to development within the Cotswolds AONB, but as in this case development outside the AONB which “affects its setting”.
5. The Board published the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2008-13 in April 2008.²
6. The statutory Management Plan contains the following policies of relevance to this application:

Landscape Policy LP1: *That the unique character, tranquillity, and special qualities of the Cotswolds landscape are conserved and enhanced.*

7. The Management Plan identifies the Cotswold Escarpment as a “special quality” of the AONB.

Key issue LK3 notes: *The surroundings of the AONB are also important to its landscape character and quality. Views out from the AONB and into it from surrounding areas can be very significant...*

8. The Council has endorsed the AONB Management Plan as a material consideration in the determining of planning applications.
9. The Board has published a Position Statement: “Development in the setting of the Cotswolds AONB”³ to amplify the policy in the Management Plan.
10. The Board has given careful consideration to the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) submitted by the applicant.
11. The Board does not agree with the assessment relating to viewpoint 34 Haresfield Beacon

It is suggested in the LVIA that the “Industry at Stonehouse is conspicuous to the south-west (out of shot on the viewpoint figure”. The Board would suggest that this because industry at Stonehouse is **not** conspicuous in this view, as is demonstrated by the photograph taken in winter as Figure 2 of the Design and Access statement. In this view the only conspicuous feature in the agricultural landscape of the Severn Vale are the garden centre buildings at Javelin Park and the heaps of demolition material on the proposed site.

² http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/management_plan/conserving.html

³ <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/userfiles/settingfinal%20headed6july2010.pdf>

The Board is of the opinion that by using the applicant's methodology for the assessment of impact on landscape character the proposed development would produce a "*particularly intensive change (i.e. a dominating effect) over a more limited area. The proposals would be a prominent feature in the make-up of the character area*" i.e. a **Large** magnitude of change in landscape character.

Similarly in terms of visual change there would a **Large** magnitude of change caused because "*The proposals would be a prominent feature*"

As the receptor is deemed to be of High sensitivity, (on the Cotswold Way National Trail), this revised assessment would result in a **Major** significant effect, which would be harmful to a special quality of the Cotswolds AONB – views out from the escarpment.

12. The sensitivity of the location to the construction of large buildings is no doubt the reason for the imposition by the Secretary of State of a maximum height of 15.7m for buildings in the decision on appeal ref; APP/C1625/V/06/1199309 dated 27th March 2007. This stipulation seems to have been ignored by the applicant in the design process.
13. The Board can see no proven "national interest" in these proposals as is required by Policy 26 of the Waste Local Plan, nor is the adverse impact on a special "feature" quality of the AONB - views out from the escarpment. capable of being mitigated due to the scale of the development as is required by the same policy..
13. **The Board therefore considers that the proposal is contrary to the NPPF, Policy 26 of the Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan and Policy NE8 of the Stroud Local Plan, and the Board objects to these proposals.**