

The air we  
breathe

# Torry and the incinerator

The locality of Torry is one in which, along with additional community councils are fighting a proposal to build an EFW (Energy from waste) incinerator by Aberdeen council.

The research on the role of incinerators within the UK and across the EU is a narrative which does have health and environmental implications for those living in the surrounding area. In addition to this incinerators have additional effects such as negative equity in housing as people desperate to get out of the area, sell cheap to developers leading to a continuous cycle of rental markets in the local area. Once set up the system demands constant feeding, it can not be simply shut on and off. Taking Sweden as an example, due to the country becoming increasingly sufficient in recycling all waste, (Less than 1 per cent of Swedish household waste was sent to landfill last year or any year since 2011) they began to import the waste of other countries.

The community councils have been working to stop the incinerator including; Cove, Kincorth and Nigg Bay. The city councils response is that there are no concerns about health, the system will create new jobs and supply heat to local houses

and is in response to national agendas to stop the use of landfills in Scotland. The phrase 'waste is sustainable' comes out regularly. This is in an area where (Wellington road) air pollution is already the third worst in Scotland and they have had continued problems with odours from a waste water management site.

Reflective of a global narrative. The incinerator is being placed in an area that is already facing health and social inequalities.

(<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/sweden-s-recycling-is->

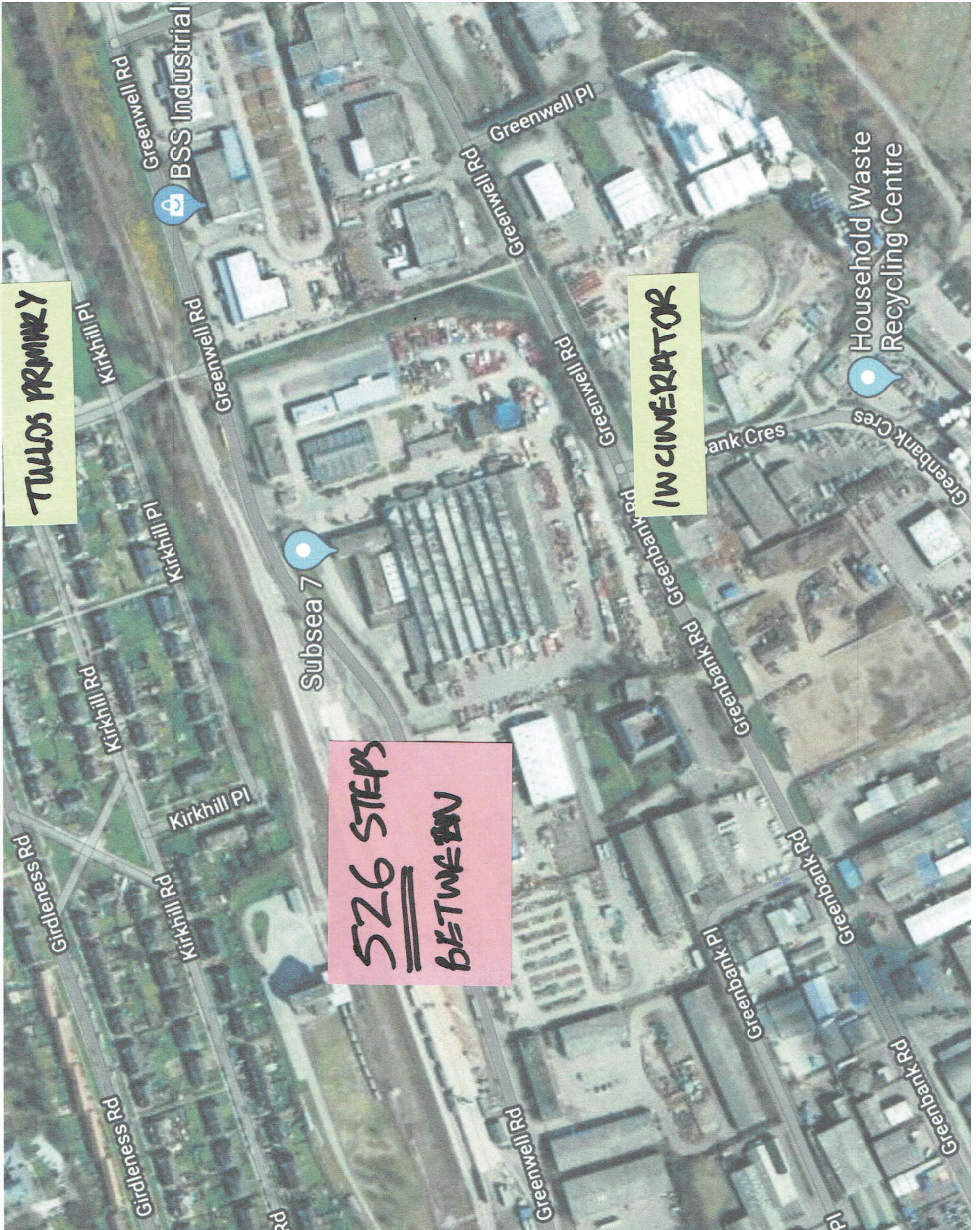


'The old gasometer site' (greenback crescent)

[so-revolutionary-the-country-has-run-out-of-rubbish-a7462976.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/sweden-s-recycling-is-so-revolutionary-the-country-has-run-out-of-rubbish-a7462976.html). Dec 2016)



View from Nigg Bay



More than 200 objections have been lodged against a proposed £150 million incinerator which is poised to be built in East Tullis but would also serve households in Aberdeenshire and Moray. From January 2021, Scottish councils will be banned from putting any biodegradable waste into landfill.

The scheme has been *designated for a derelict industrial site* (NOTES - Greenback surrounding area is both residential and industrial) and would be able to take in 150,000 tonnes of waste a year - both household and commercial.

Waste manager Pete Lawrence told elected members that the project was "exciting and forward thinking". He added that the scheme would provide the opportunity to deliver

improvements, to tackle fuel poverty and to develop business opportunities using surplus heat.

He said: *"Like it or not, Torry has a higher number of people in fuel poverty than anywhere across the city.* (NOTES - Do we need to look at why this is rather than an incinerator as a 'solution'? Many of the property in Torry are ex-council properties which tend to be poorly insulated to begin with - should we be looking at these resolutions? have we?. - Would the energy system provided lock people into specific energy supply contracts? "This creates long term construction jobs away from the oil and gas industry."

But SNP group leader Councillor Stephen Flynn questioned Mr Lawrence on how many residents would benefit from the cheaper en-

ergy. The council officer said there is the capacity to develop a heat network which could provide heat to thousands of homes. *He added: "It is not possible, as part of this application, to provide details of numbers and costs." "We could be looking at in excess of 45,000 people and it may be across the city."* (NOTES - how is this number calculated?)

Community councils in Torry, Cove, Kincorth and Nigg have strongly objected to the plans.

(<https://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/fp/news/local/anger-over-incinerator/>)



Councillors visited the site to look around ahead of the public hearing' (Evening express)

# Torry Community Council

[www.torrycommunitycouncil.org.uk](http://www.torrycommunitycouncil.org.uk)

15th May 2016

Development Management  
Communities, Housing and Infrastructure  
Aberdeen City Council  
Business Hub 4, Marischal College  
Broad Street  
ABERDEEN AB10 1AB

Dear Sir/Madam

## Application Reference P160276, proposed Incinerator (EFW), Torry, Aberdeen.

At the meeting of Torry Community Council on 21st April 2016, it was agreed that we would submit a formal objection against the planned Incinerator (EFW plant) that is proposed to the located next to Torry.

We wish to object to the above application on the following key planning and environmental issues:

Firstly, this planned incinerator is contrary to the overarching national policies for Zero-Waste, and will lead to increases in carbon footprints and contribute adversely to climate change

Secondly, we are firmly of the view that this planned incinerator will be damaging to the environment not just of Torry but across Aberdeen and the North East, will be a loss of amenity, and damaging to the health and wellbeing of communities. We do not accept that there are any benefits that outweigh the loss of health, amenity, environment and wellbeing

Thirdly, we are very strongly of the view that the long term financial implications of building this incinerator are flawed and that the risk of unidentified and un-controllable capital and revenue spend could add to future debt burdens that the council tax payers of Aberdeen will have to pay.

In more detail, our concerns are: -

1 The proposal to incinerate waste rather than address the source of waste materials is the wrong priority and is contrary to policy R3 of the present Local Development Plan.

Attention should be given to reuse and recycling of all finite materials. This proposal can only lead to lower levels of recycling of many materials as they would be incinerated rather than reused. Our point is this...if all finite materials are reused and recycled, then what is left to burn?

*RR - GOONS*

2 The proposal to incinerate waste in one building from all of the North-East is contrary to Policy NE 10 and will lower air quality locally and across Aberdeen. Communities to the South of the River Dee experience a high concentration of odour creating industrial activities that use an over-stretched and inadequate network of roads.

3 The enormous size and design of this major development proposal is contrary to Policies D1 and D6 and will add to evidenced traffic congestion and air-polluting diesel exhaust fumes near and on routes leading to this proposed site in and around Torry; the traffic assessment in support of the planning application concludes that the extra number of

*NECESSARY TO FEED ONCE BUILT*

weekly vehicles (up to 200 movements of unspecified size of vehicles) will not have any impact on the local network where as Wellington Road regularly experiences gridlock.

4 Torry is also known to have its own micro-climate. We consider that the baseline data used in support of the planning application is flawed as the data used is taken from Dyce (seven miles away). It is a well-known and established fact that temperature inversion is a North-East Coastal phenomenon creating a micro-climate in Torry (in particular) that traps gases and odours. We see this happening and know this locally as the haar!!

5. The proposed development of the site does not comply with Policy CE1 of the current LDP and can only adversely affect the health and mental wellbeing of the 11,000 plus residents of Torry whose lives have been blighted over decades by serious odours from fish factories and the sewage works. The proposed site for this huge incinerator at the foot of the Gramp is too close to many thousands of family homes and only some 300 metres from one of our local primary schools. Regulation and enforcement action by the statutory regulators, SEPA and the City Council over the last 15 years proved totally inadequate to help communities when the sewage treatment works failed consistently with the repugnant odours affecting Torry and nearby communities. As a consequence, we therefore have no confidence that the technology promised for the incinerator in this planning application can be up to the job of protecting public health and air quality.

*WASTE TREATMENT*

*45020 X*

We are of the view that the proposal to build an incinerator is critically flawed. Even though other nations are moving away from incineration, there is still enough capacity across Britain that is leading to over-capacity in existing incinerators in Britain as well as Europe, and all at a time as new processes to address reuse and recycling are gathering apace. We do not believe that the prospectus for an incinerator will create jobs (local or otherwise) and would hope that planning and environmental policy would be based on the Waste Hierarchy for Reducing and Recycling: Source Institute of Local Self-Reliance 2014. The business strategy for job creation in waste management should take full advantage of the Circular Economy where there is evidence that many sustainable jobs can be created.

*WIDEN CONVERSATION - SCOTLAND CLEARER INCINERATORS PROPOSED*

We remain unconvinced that sufficient scientific research has been undertaken on the long term effects of the release of all gases from incinerators, and point out that there are numerous experiences of the introduction and use of materials, pharmaceuticals and industrial processes where health implications were not considered at the time. We urge that extreme caution be exercised in this regard to protect future generations from potential long term harmful effects of the chemistry of combustion.

Lastly, the building of this incinerator at the foot of the Gramps can only make Torry and the south of the Dee areas a dumping ground for municipal, commercial and possibly hazardous waste from across the North East of Scotland, and further afield. We support the need for a Public Hearing to be convened to enable our concerns to be fully expressed. By reason of the clear deviation from National and Local Policies, and to meet local health and social needs of the local communities, we appeal to the Planning Committee and the City Council to refuse this application and any other applications to build an incinerator in or near any residential community in Aberdeen.

Yours faithfully,

*PUBLIC HEARING CANCELLED - NO THROUGH.*

David Fryer - Secretary  
For and On Behalf of Torry Community Council

In October 2016, Councillors voted 23-14 in favour of the proposal.

Since March 2017, a series of meetings have been held with each of the project bidders and the city council.

By November 2017, the dialogue process will be completed and bidders will be asked to submit their detailed proposals.

Submissions will then be evaluated and the council hopes to identify two of those bidders in February 2018 to take part in further discussions and to submit final tenders.

In the report, Peter Lawrence, a waste and recycling manager at the local authority, said: "The preferred bidder should be known by April 2018 with the contract awarded in the autumn of 2018."

In order to develop and operate the energy from waste facility, it will be necessary for the successful bidder to obtain a permit from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency.

Mr Lawrence added: "The application for this will be submitted once the preferred bidder is appointed in spring 2018."

(<https://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/fp/news/local/meetings-to-be-held-in-run-up-to-bids-being-submitted-for-controversial-city-incinerator/>)

With continued objection from the community council, the situation has reached stale mate with the city council continuing to push the proposal through.

This relationship has raised some very urgent questions relating to seemingly democratic processes, climate change 'strategies' and community engagement:

**What happens  
when power  
structures are  
telling us this is  
right for climate  
change targets?**

**How do we begin  
to feel more  
personally about  
the air we breathe?**

**If the arguments against the incinerator are rational, what are the real reasons for development? (oil decrease? harbour development?)**

**How do we imagine a future within Torry if this incinerator is built? An area already affected by health and social inequalities. How do we imagine living?**

**Can we re-imagine the air we breathe as a commons? (what might this look like?)**

**Is there any opportunity for 'empowerment' for citizens?**

**If this process is what 'public engagement' looks like within political structures: what should it, or could it look like?**

# In this absence of city wide engagement - can we create a space for civic participation?

## VISIBILITY - SKILLS - PARTICIPATION

There remains for this narrative so far, an issue with the visibility of this campaign as a city issue, and not just one for Torry.

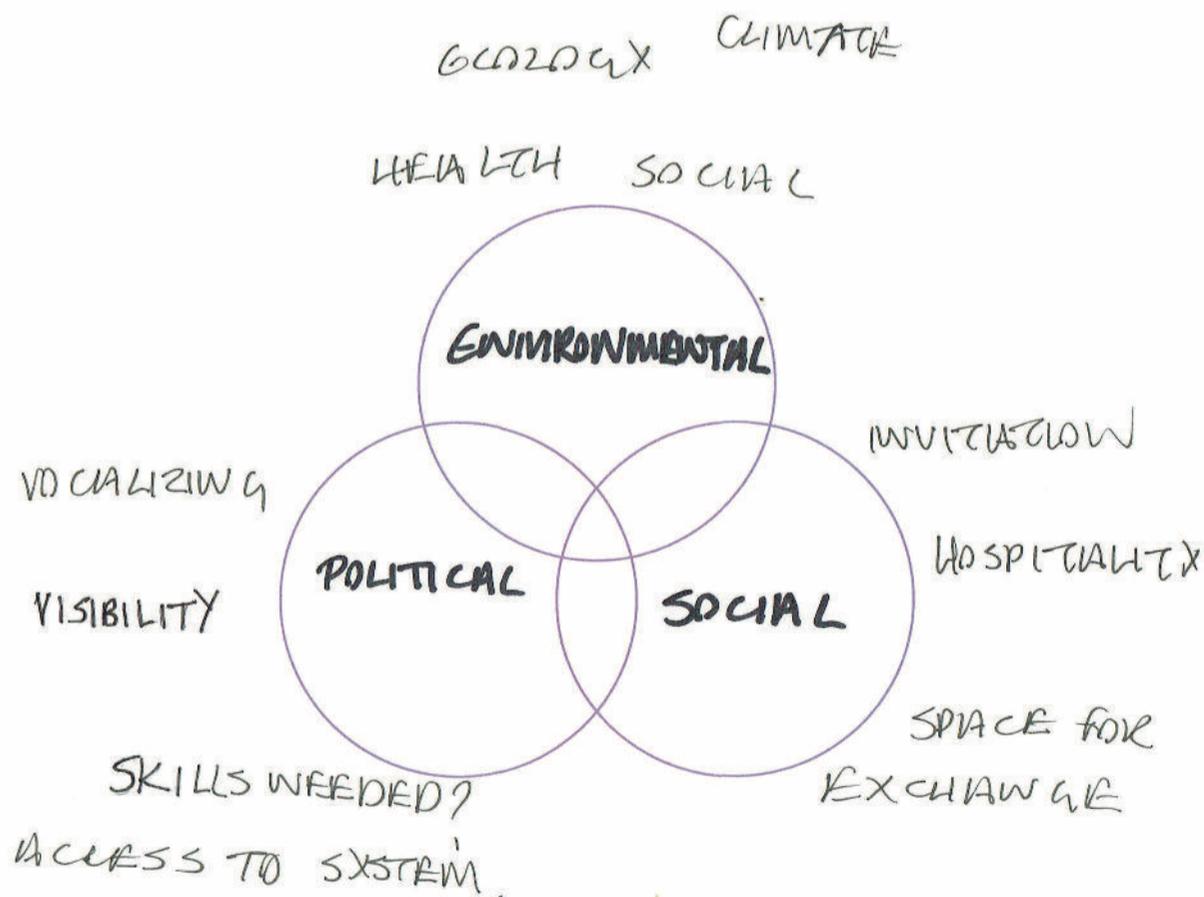
The reliance on a localised press coverage can mean that the story gets lost. From a population of 11,000 in Torry alone, only 200 objections were lodged against it. Is this reflective of 'time poor' people? or those unable to engage politically?

311 signatures remain on the '38 degrees website' (<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/no-incinerator-here> - cited 30.01.17) and a social media page 'No incinerator here' with 597 members. (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1075704679136412/> - Cited 30.01.17) How might we create further visibility for those who want to participate?

So far there has not been a 'lead' politician who has publicly objected to the proposal. This maybe due, in part to councillor voting being void on issues that they publicly object to, however their still remains a space to be filled. Knowing the political system in an immediate way is something that this narrative will need.

Beyond the signing of a petition, or the membership of an informal social network - how could we get involved? What strategies (politically and socially) are needed to ensure that the voices of those living here are heard? What skills are needed? Who do those strategies speak to?

This is a Scotland wide issue, what can we learn from the successful campaigns elsewhere?



# Perth campaign - What can we learn?



Municipal waste incinerators in Scotland (<http://ukwin.org.uk/map/>)

## Municipal waste incinerators in Scotland:

- Grey incinerator markers represent existing incinerators, including those under construction /in commissioning.
- Red questionmark markers represent potential incinerators.
- Yellow smiley markers represent potential incinerators that have been withdrawn, refused permission, etc.

(<http://ukwin.org.uk/map/>)

## *Extract from The Scotsman. 2013*

'Plans for a £100 million waste incinerator in the heart of Perth have been rejected by the Scottish Government. Scottish Ministers have refused an appeal by Grundon Waste Management to site the giant waste to energy plant at Shore Road, near Perth Prison, following a lengthy public inquiry.

Grundon lodged an appeal with the Scottish Government after Perth and Kinross councillors rejected plans to site the waste to energy plant on an area between the River Tay and the

South Inch parklands for a second time. An eight-day public inquiry was held last year into the controversial development. Perth and Kinross Council, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, the local community and Perth Prison management vigorously opposed the scheme.

The Prison Service claimed that constant noise and vibrations from the plant could cause prisoners to protest, refuse to work or even assault staff. The inquiry reporter Dannie Onn has rejected the appeal. And his decision has now been upheld by Scottish Ministers. Mr Onn states in his report: "The urban location of the appeal site is sensitive to the introduction of a large scale plant. The risk of harm to the amenity of those living nearby is greater than it would be with a smaller facility or a more open location. It is therefore necessary, on the balance of risk, to assess more carefully how significant the impacts would be. In this case, there is insufficient information to predict accurately and reassuringly whether the impacts would be acceptable or not.

"In some cases, it might be safe to allow the detailed matters to be dealt with by the licensing regime. However, SEPA (the Scottish Environment Protection Agency) remains unconvinced that a licence could be granted for the facility as proposed here. It may be that a plant of the scale and type proposed could be shown to be acceptable, but the design before me has not evolved sufficiently to be sure that it could." He adds: "I find that the detailed measures for the control of noise, dust and other forms of potential pollution have not been satisfactorily addressed in the proposal at appeal." A spokesman for Grundon Waste Management said the company was

"disappointed" by the Scottish Ministers' decision to turn down its latest appeal for the plant in the city.

Pete Wishart the SNP MP for Perth and North Perthshire, welcomed the Government decision. He said: "I am absolutely delighted that the Scottish ministers have upheld Perth and Kinross Council's refusal of Grundon's application for an incinerator on Shore Road. I sincerely hope that this means the end, at last, for the prospect of this pollutant belching monstrosity blighting our city." He claimed: "The application, even in its amended version, would have dominated the city skyline and was completely inappropriate for a site so close to the city centre. The people of Perth made their views on this issue perfectly clear, the council stood by them and now that decision has been backed up by the Scottish Ministers. It is now time that Grundon listened to the message they have been given."

(<https://www.scotsman.com/news/environment/government-rejects-perth-waste-incinerator-plans-1-3052771>)

## **VISIBILITY - SKILLS - PARTICIPATION**

A multifaceted and collaborative approach was taken: MSP's, Community Councils, volunteers and environmental activists worked together to focus a methodology that created space for skills and knowledge exchanges and also ensured that they were visible not only to the city but nationally.

I have begun interviewing the campaigners involved, asking a series of questions:

What were the strategies involved in

this process?

Who were the main groups pushing fighting this?

What made you get involved in the campaign against the incinerator?

***Cllr. Peter Barrett Scottish Liberal Democrat Perth City Centre - response***

I started the campaign to Stop Perth incinerator because I was horrified at the prospect of a large and noxious power station being installed in the city centre and was determined to fight it. I strongly believed that the scale of the incinerators proposed for Perth City centre was far too big, it was so large that there wasn't a sufficient safety separation between it and neighbouring property and leisure spaces. The incinerator was to be downwind of an SSSI (Site of scientific interest) on Kinnoull hill and either had to have a gigantic chimney or unproven plasma technology to address NOx emissions. It was the wrong thing, of the wrong size in the wrong place.

My strategies to oppose the incinerator were to raise awareness and to establish valid planning objections to the application. Awareness raising started with the press and gathering a petition, public meetings run by the local community council. At the time of the second application we stopped the petition early on (after about 1500 names) as going door to door was too slow. (although we had cascaded the petition by sending everyone who signed it a form to gather more names and addresses). We switched to getting letters of objection signed and submitted to the

Council. We produced template letters which people only had to sign and address and submitted thousands of these by collecting names and addresses at the tescos closest to the incinerator site and on the High Street. The Council had to take on temporary clerical staff to deal with the volume of objections.

I had the support of about 6 women dedicated to campaigning against the incinerator and collecting objections. We got regular press and tv coverage as the mass of objections grew. I set up a facebook page to spread word about the campaign, when and where we were gathering objections. There was no support for the incinerator from any of the 4 councillors in my ward but I took the lead on the campaign. It is possible that the other councillors held their fire so that they could vote on the application when it came to committee or they may just have been too slow out of the starting blocks. As a councillor if you publicly oppose an application you can't take part in the decision. We had vocal support from the MP but he didn't really get to grips with the planning detail or do any of the campaigning on the ground.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) required close reading and challenge. The Bridgend Gannochy and Kinnoull Community Council did excellent work on unpicking the detail of the planning application and environmental impact assessment. They had the benefit of people with industrial and scientific knowledge to challenge the development on safety as well as environmental grounds. The scale and mass of the developments were also big issues as the site was too small, noise was a factor given the site was next to Perth Prison. The EIA was very weak if not completely inaccur-

rate about the noise impact to neighbours and sensitive receptors. Extra measurements and tests had to be carried out to correct the failings of the EIA. The community council also identified the weaknesses in the site selection process, basically it was chosen because it had outline planning permission and no proper alternative options had been fully investigated. My group, the community council and the MP were the three prongs of the campaign against the incinerator. We didn't agree on everything, for example the community council expended a lot of energy trying to get the original outline planning consent revoked, and initially challenging the EIA process rather than the detail. They were justifiably angry with the mistakes that the Council made at the outline planning stage when 'in principle' consent was given (wrongly and with insufficient conditions in many people's view). Another example was that the community council weren't very supportive of my petitions because the Council only counted a petition as one item of objection regardless of how many people signed it, however I knew that it would give a hook for press coverage as the petition grew 500, 700, 2000 people signing in a weekend etc. Local journalists would come to me for the latest on the campaign. The petition was also good for finding volunteers and emails for communication.

### ***Bridgeend, Gannochy & Kinnoull Community Council***

In the case of the Perth Incinerator, the applicant received outline approval from PKC before anyone was aware of the proposal, (the planning application was submitted over Xmas and was rapidly approved by the Council officials without reference to the elected members). To

make matters worse, SEPA (Scottish Environment Protection Agency) elected not to object.

Our Community Council built up a team of local people who had expertise in Planning matters as well as strong technical background on the chemical industry. We mounted a press campaign and gave lectures to public meetings detailing our concerns about the proposal. We generated funds to get legal advice. This advice told us that the Council had acted illegally in granting planning permission. However, even though the permission was illegal, it was not possible to rescind it, thus the planning consent stood.

After much campaigning the local authority bowed to the pressure and decided to refuse full planning permission. The applicant was still in a strong position to appeal since permission had initially been granted and the applicant had met all the outline planning conditions. At this point our community council switched its pressure to SEPA insisting that they object to the application and providing them technical grounds for their objection. SEPA initially refused. We complained and eventually escalated our complaint to SEPA's national executive. At this point SEPA changed position and objected to the proposal. This was the turning point of our campaign. But we did have to go through a public enquiry when the applicant appealed to the Scottish Government. Again, it was our community council, not the local authority, who mounted the main argument against the proposal. In short, winning an objection to a proposed incinerator (that the Scottish Government deems to be GREEN TECHNOLOGY) is an uphill battle and requires dedication and expertise.

### ***Andy Llanwarne Co-ordinator, FoE Tayside [Friends of the earth]***

Whilst FoE Tayside was aware of the Grundon incinerator proposals for Perth a few years ago, we weren't directly involved in the campaign opposing it, as our focus tends to be more in the Dundee area where most of our activists are based. I also used the anti-Grundon campaign as a useful case study in teaching a university course on environmental impact assessment.

FoET's main achievement in 2013 was persuading Dundee City Council to object to an application for a biomass power station in Dundee port, against the recommendations of its officials, after a long campaign. One of the main reasons was the potential impact on air quality in a city which is all contained by an air quality management area, due to poor air quality, although we set out a number of other reasons why the scheme was unsustainable environmentally as well as economically.

However, when an application came forward for a new commercial waste to energy plant in Dundee nearly a year ago, to replace the existing unreliable incinerator, we gave our qualified support after setting out our concerns about the need to make greater efforts to recycle and reuse more domestic waste. It was approved, and we are maintaining our pressure on the recycling aspects. We are however aware of the proliferation of applications for incinerators elsewhere in Scotland, which threatens to create over capacity when the zero waste strategy should lead to a reduction in residual waste.

# UK Health Research

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Public lecture given by Michael Ryan on 29 January 2007 in Norwich on the health damage of industrial PM2.5 emissions.

**Lecture in Norwich on industrial PM2.5s**  
Should past failures to get justice over health damage from industrial PM2.5 emissions from incinerators etc. discourage further efforts?  
By Michael Ryan BSc, C Eng., MICE

### Some background

Action groups, or communities in the UK wishing to prove health damage from an industrial source of particles small enough to get into the lungs fail for a variety of reasons - but not due to lack of scientific merit.

In May 2002, I gave a lecture at UMIST called "Listening to local concerns" which was later published by TOXCAT, and is still online in the December 2002 issue, and which gave some detail of the Walsall scandal.

Walsall residents were very concerned in the 1980s about high rates of infant mortality, leukaemias etc. and the possible link with nearby hazardous waste sites and an incinerator. They tried to get help from the

POWER STRUCTURES  
STATE SYSTEMS  
ARE "SAFE"  
"GOOD" FOR CLIMATE  
CHANGE  
(T.J. DEMOS  
- Green engineering)

# EU rules change could freeze incinerator plan

2017.

## Energy: Recycling legislation casts doubt on £180m project

BY JOSHUA KING

The European Union has warned that new rules could turn a planned £180million incinerator in the north-east into a "white elephant".

The energy-from-waste facility at East Tullos is part of a joint partnership between Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray councils.

The three authorities are scrambling to meet national waste and recycling targets set by the government. From 2020, no organic waste can be put in landfill.

The facility will have a 260ft chimney and is aimed at reducing the carbon footprint of the authorities before the tougher regulations are imposed.

But objectors have warned that further changes in legislation could make the energy-from-waste model obsolete before it is even operational.

### Tell us what you think...

E-mail: [pj.letters@ajl.co.uk](mailto:pj.letters@ajl.co.uk)

Write to: Letters to the Editor, The Press and Journal, Lang Stracht, Mastrick, Aberdeen AB15 6DF

[www.pressandjournal.co.uk](http://www.pressandjournal.co.uk)



steer clear of the technology.

A report from the European Commission says that recycling must be the focus of all waste projects and that disposing of waste in landfill or incineration is the "least favourable option".

The report says: "Member states are advised to gradually phase out public support for the recovery of energy from mixed waste."

"When planning future investments on waste-to-energy capacity, it is essential that member states take into consideration the risk of stranded assets."

Last night Aberdeen-

warned that because the government has already said it will follow EU waste regulations after Brexit, the incinerator project could be a "colossal" waste of money.

"The European Commis-

### "Phase out public support for the recovery of energy from mixed waste"

sion and experts clearly warn against stranded assets - in other words this could be a very expensive white elephant at close to a

Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City council, along with Moray, to rethink and prevent this potentially colossal waste of money.

"There are more jobs and better value in alternatives which the investment intended for this incinerator could deliver."

Local authority officers behind the scheme have said the incinerator, which could burn 150,000 tonnes of waste each year during its 20-year lifespan, would help power Aberdeen and regenerate the site in the Torry area of the city.

Last night independent Moray councillor John Cowe said the incinerator project could be a "win-win" for the councils and residents.

Mr Cowe, chairman of the Moray Economic Partnership, said: "We have to find a route forward with the waste that is generated in Scotland. We have officers in Moray Council who worked on the Shetland en-

need another what it is be put waste ground ar

Mr Co more ca some w is nov area

confidence

confidence

confidence

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confidence

CLIMATE  
HOW WOULD  
BREXIT  
AFFECT  
THIS?

(UK ALREADY STRUGGLES TO MEET TARGETS)

### ABSTRACT

Detailed knowledge on the effects of air pollutants on human health is a prerequisite for the development of effective policies to reduce the adverse impact of ambient air pollution. The second edition of WHO's Air quality guidelines (AQG) for Europe, formulated in 1996, summarizes systematically the effects of several air pollutants. These guidelines have been used extensively to establish regulatory frameworks for air quality assessment and management. To support the development of European Union policy on clean air for Europe (CAFÉ), this WHO Working Group (WG) was convened to review systematically the most recent scientific evidence on the adverse health effects of particulate matter (PM), ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) and nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>). The review focused on studies that were included in the WHO AQG, and was produced, and was a health-related aspect of the WHO AQG. The WG adopted a recommendation for health-related indicator for health-related increased risk of mortality and morbidity. PM<sub>10</sub> (which includes PM<sub>2.5</sub>) is the most commonly used indicator for health-related increased risk of mortality and morbidity. The WG also acknowledged the adverse health effects on mortality and morbidity of particulate matter concentrations experienced in many cities in Europe. The WG recommended that WHO should update exposure-response relationships for the most severe health outcomes induced by particulate matter and ozone presented by AQGs. The WG also concluded that an update of the current WHO AQG for nitrogen dioxide, which is also an important precursor for the formation of ozone and particulate matter, was not warranted.

LIMITATIONS OF LANGUAGE - WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO PEOPLE [?]

UK citizens are taking air pollution monitoring into their own hands

Thousands of people are using home air quality monitoring kits due to fears official figures are not capturing dangerous pollution levels, say Friends of the Earth

Orla Marsh

14 September 2017 13:25 BST

growing number of citizens are monitoring local air quality because of fears official figures are not capturing "dangerous" levels of pollution.

The environmental charity Friends of the Earth has said 70 local groups are now using their own air quality monitoring kits and noted a "surprising" increase in people taking monitoring into their own hands.

ROLE OF CITIZEN SCIENCE [?]



## Even a sceptic has to believe in air pollution

Andrea Leadsom should ignore the bickering about global warming and take radical steps to clean up our toxic cities



@HUGORIFKIND

There are environmental concerns, and environmental concerns. As in, on the one hand, there's Gaia and science; an intricate balance of gases and ecology now teetering in ways that only people far more learned than most of us truly comprehend. Whereas, on the other, there's the sort of experience I used to have when I briefly lived in Delhi. Back in my bedsit, after a 40-minute commute on a motorised rickshaw, I'd blow my nose. And out of it would crawl this thick, black, sticky manifestation of the city itself. Like a slug.

Pollution is not necessarily climate change. Sometimes, it's just filth. Last week, London air quality set a modern record for being terrible. More than once, those of us in Britain's capital were breathing in more crud than our counterparts in Beijing. There are far worse places in the world (and Beijing is certainly

one of them) but this was nothing to be sniffed at, or ideally sniffed at all. UK air pollution is linked to 40,000 early deaths a year. It hinders brain development and may contribute to the onset of Alzheimer's. All in all, it's bloody horrible.

You may have read that urban wood burners were to blame, which is true, but not very true. Most likely, they contributed to a tiny proportion of the spike, with the vast bulk being the fault of diesel cars. Both, though, were once regarded as ways of lowering your CO<sub>2</sub> footprint, which is the sort of irony global warming sceptics grow positively gleeful about.

Well, the ball is now in their court.

Air pollution is right there, bubbling at the back of your throat

Invariably, by some magical coincidence, those most strongly doubtful of global warming science have always been the same people whose own politics would be in absolute crisis if their doubt was removed. Environmentalism will always be communitarian, because it is a belief that individuals need to make sacrifices for the good of all.

an anathema generally, then it's terribly convenient if you can decide the whole thing is a sham.

This time they cannot. Air pollution isn't locked in sea ice, or floating above the poles. It's right there, bubbling at the back of your throat. You really can't pretend it's all a conspiracy by Bono and Coldplay. Still, governments drag their feet. Late last year, the High Court ruled that Britain's air quality plan was so inadequate that it was actually illegal under EU law. Its flaws are political, not accidental. When the Department for the Environment drew up plans to curb diesels back in 2015, the government — the one then led by a man who put a windmill on his own chimney — quietly kiboshed them. As one government official put it, any action on cars "would be politically very difficult, especially given the impacts on motorists". Or, to put that another way, "we can't tackle the cars, because of the cars".

The same dynamic emerged in London last year, when Sadiq Khan proposed a national plan for phasing out diesels. Tories in the London Assembly opposed him on the basis that this would hit "white van drivers", as though that were an unintended consequence, and not a large part of the whole point. Any

Theresa May put her rival, Andrea Leadsom, in charge of environmental policy, perhaps mainly to dispel rumours she has no sense of humour. Leadsom has opposed wind farm subsidies, and famously asked "Is climate change real?" when she picked up the energy brief in 2015, but that shouldn't affect her views on pollution. Yet somehow the two have come together, as though she's now scared of looking like she has the

Yes, there will be costs, but why the hell shouldn't there be?

wrong kind of friends. Her department's view on the High Court's verdict — and, indeed, an air pollution generally — seems to be that it's all just a really annoying hassle. As though it were theoretical, or perhaps happening in Bangladesh in half a century, as opposed to tangible, and here, and now. "People might choke," the thinking seems to be, "but at least Ukip won't call us hippies."

Leadsom needs to pull herself together. At present, the plan seems to be to tick enough boxes for the court to eventually decide we're fulfilling our EU clean air

will pass, post-Brexit, into UK law. Forget that. Go further. First, phase out diesels. People will complain, not least because they were once bribed to buy them, but ride it out and bribe them again. In our cities, make taxis and buses electric. Kill off our lingering diesel trains, which make stations which still host them (such as Paddington) such choking hotspots.

Then there are bikes. Don't be scared, just because Jeremy Corbyn rides one, and David Cameron used to pretend. Encourage them. Mean it. Yes, there will be costs, but why the hell shouldn't there be? What else are taxes for? The first Clean Air Act, back in 1956, offered generous subsidies to kill off the home fire. It worked. We can do this.

If we cannot, what hope for that other, bigger environmentalism? Air quality is not the stuff of computer models. You don't need to take it from Professor Brian Cox; you just need to hawk in a tissue. Nor can we hide our inaction behind the old canard that it's all too big and too global for our own efforts to make any difference, because it's here, and us, and right outside our doors. When it comes to our ability to keep our planet habitable, air quality is the canary in the mineshaft. And when the canary starts to choke, you're in

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THE EVERYDAY VISUALS.

# The Air We Breathe

'The air we breathe' will consist of a series of events, that will focus on questions raised in relation to democracy, and climate change (specifically air pollution) in the context of Torry.

Concentrating on binary relationships between 'the council' power structure and the community councils, an 'us against them' approach is not useful and the complexity of political relationships requires a form that is at least triadic in nature.

The project involves a series of talks from national political and environmental action groups, work from artist Yvette Bathgate, and designer Ben Durack.

## Spaces for participation

## Knowledge sharing

## Acknowledging difference

## Access to democratic process

## Vocalization

## Collective approaches

