

Cover Letter:

October 2008

Dear Resident,

Belfast City Council Consultation Survey – Making Land Available for a Waste Treatment Facility

Belfast City Council wants to hear your views on whether we should make land available at the North Foreshore for building and operating a waste treatment facility.

Waste is an important issue affecting all the people of Belfast. What we do with our waste affects our environment and has implications for us and future generations. . The European Union EU has set targets for reducing the amount of waste we put in landfill and will fine local councils who do not meet these targets.

Belfast City Council is working with the people of Belfast to reduce, reuse and recycle waste and many of you will be familiar with our blue and brown bin recycling and the black box scheme. But even with this, we will still not be able to meet our future landfill reduction targets. We are therefore considering using land at the North Foreshore for alternative waste treatment facilities.

To help explain what these are and the reasons why we are considering doing this, we have enclosed an information leaflet. We are also holding informal road shows at various locations (<across the city > or <in north Belfast>) so you can drop by and get more information or ask us any questions. Information is also available on our website www.belfastcity.gov.uk

We have sent you a short questionnaire and return envelope and hope that you will take the time to give us your views on this important issue. Your answers and the views you express are absolutely confidential.

The findings from this survey will be used to help the Councillors make a final decision. Results from the survey and details of the Council's decision will be put on our website.

If you have any queries regarding this survey please contact (**contact details to be confirmed**) at Belfast City Council on.

Yours sincerely,

MAKING LAND AVAILABLE AT THE NORTH FORESHORE FOR A WASTE TREATMENT FACILITY

What is it about?

The Council is considering whether it should make land that is zoned for industrial and commercial development at the North Foreshore available to arc21 (a partnership of 11 Councils including Belfast) so it can develop a facility for treating waste that cannot be recycled or composted. There are two types of treatment plant – a Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) plant or an Energy from Waste (EfW) incinerator.

Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT)

Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) is a process of sorting typical landfill waste to recover any more materials that can be recycled and treating the remaining waste so that it can either be landfilled or used as a fuel in an energy from waste process.

Energy from Waste (EfW)

Energy from Waste (EfW) is the process of using waste as a fuel to generate energy. The first step in this process is burning (or incineration). In the past incinerators pumped out smoke and polluted the air. But now legislation and modern technology prevents any pollution problems. In previous years, incinerators simply burned the waste and the energy was lost. Current best practice is that almost two thirds of the energy produced is used to make electricity and provide local heating.

Did You Know?

- In Belfast we send about 130,000 tonnes of waste to landfill each year
- If we don't reduce the amount of waste that goes to landfill, Belfast City Council will face heavy fines
- These fines could be as much as £4 million in 2012 but with the prospect of increasing every year after that. These costs would have to be met by increasing the rates
- Latest independent research shows that living or working near an Energy from Waste (EfW) incinerator does not affect people's health.
- EfW incinerators do not emit smoke, though you might see water vapour or steam
- EfW incinerators have to meet very strict emission limits laid down by Europe
- EfW is a common means of waste treatment throughout Europe and especially in some of the countries with the highest recycling rates
- MBT is also commonly used to treat waste. But if we put the MBT output in landfill we will not meet the EU targets in the longer term and will still incur fines.

What do you think?

To meet landfill reduction targets and deliver the Waste Management Plan, arc21 needs a number of new treatment facilities – potentially two MBT plants and one EfW incinerator. Belfast City Council is considering whether it should provide a site for one of these facilities.

1. Do you agree or disagree that the land should be made available to arc21 for the purposes of building and operating either:

1.a A Mechanical Biological Treatment plant

- Agree
 Disagree
 Don't know

1.b An Energy from Waste (EfW) incinerator?

- Agree
 Disagree
 Don't know

2. If you **AGREE** that the land should be made available for a Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) plant, please tell us why. (Please tick all that apply)

- Keeping my rates down
- Better for the Environment
- Benefits for the local community
- Other Please specify

2. If you **DO NOT AGREE** that the land should be made available for a Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) plant, please tell us why. (Please tick all that apply)

- Health - I think it will affect my health
- Pollution - I think it will affect the air quality
- Nuisance - I think it will encourage flies, odour, etc
- Environment - I think it will discourage people from reducing or recycling waste
- Other Please specify

3. If you **AGREE** that the land should be made available for an Energy from Waste (EfW) incinerator, please tell us why. (Please tick all that apply)

- Keeping my rates down
- Better for the Environment
- Benefits for the local community
- Other Please specify

3. If you **DO NOT AGREE** that the land should be made available for an Energy from Waste (EfW) incinerator, please tell us why. (Please tick all that apply)

- Health - I think it will affect my health
- Pollution - I think it will affect the air quality
- Nuisance - I think it will encourage flies, odour, etc
- Environment - I think it will discourage people from reducing or recycling waste
- Other Please specify

3. Please use this space to make any other comments:

4. Please tell us the **first part** of your postcode: BT_____ (e.g. BT1, BT2, BT3 etc)

Please return your completed questionnaire in the freepost envelope we have provided by < date >to:

<name at Belfast City Council>
<address>

All responses will be treated with strict confidentiality in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. In no way will Belfast City Council be able, nor permitted, to link answers to individual people.

Thank you for your time and help.

This page has been intentionally left blank.