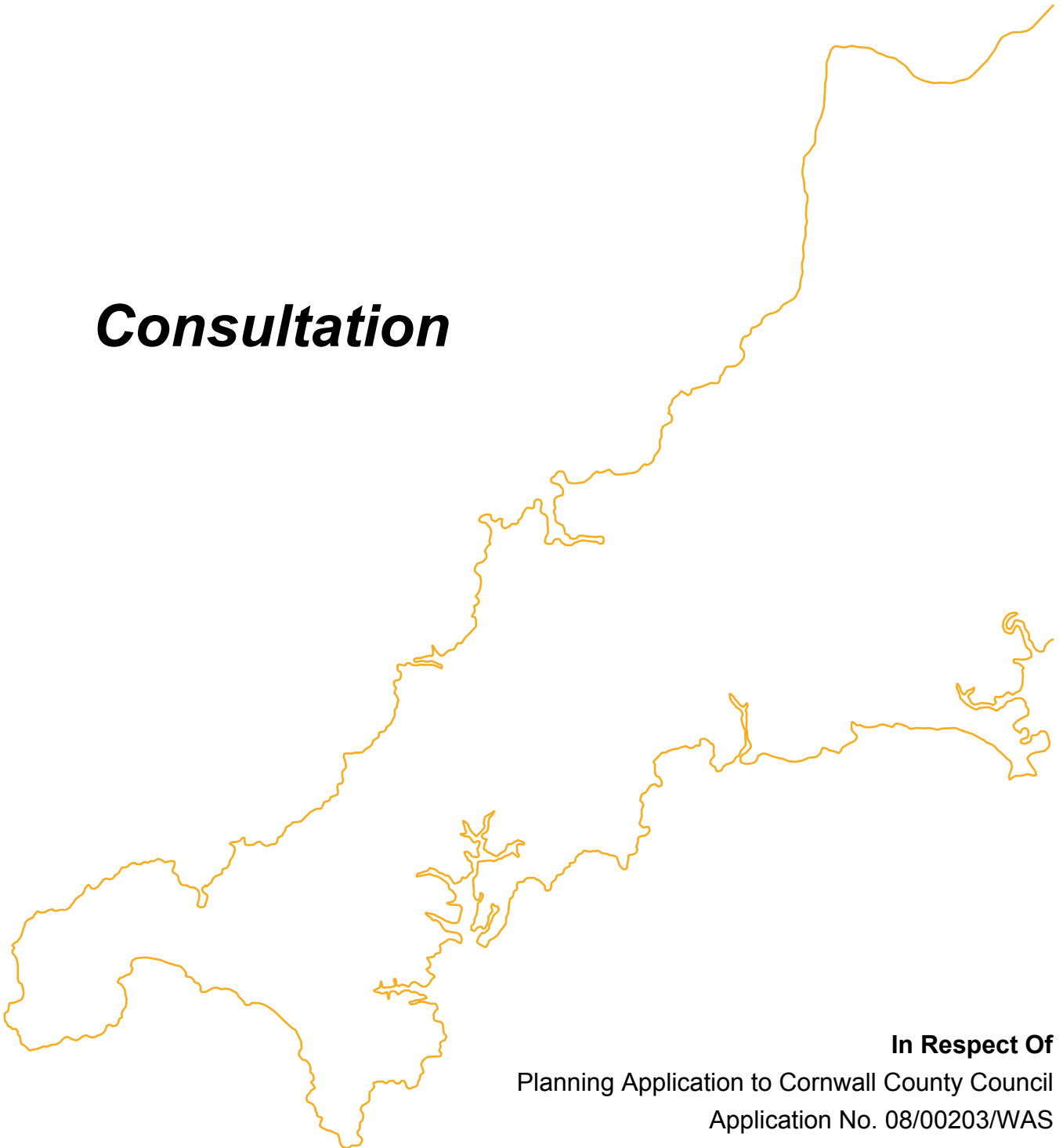




Consultee Response to SITA Additional Information

Consultee
St.Dennis Anti Incinerator Group (S.T.I.G.)

Consultation



In Respect Of
Planning Application to Cornwall County Council
Application No. 08/00203/WAS

Consultation

Introduction

Aside from the many comments and criticisms from local and borough authorities and the detailed study and subsequent criticism of the documentation provided by SITA, S.T.I.G. wish to make particular critical observations about the disregard for local opinion and the abuse of the consultation and communication process that has accompanied this proposal.

Consultation Time Allowed On The Further Information

The period of time allowed and the manner in which the documentation was made available to local people was wholly inadequate for the material requiring consultation.

Simple domestic applications to the borough council for home improvements are given only one less week

It is quite extraordinary that the consultation for the extra information requested from SITA was only four weeks, and this, over the Christmas holidays, when some of the very few places the documentation was placed for local public viewing were closed for much of the time.

It is also shocking that the application may go before the planning committee while we and other respondents are still seeking further information.

Also, this documentation came in the form of three large lever-arch files – more than one foot in depth of dense, mostly technical data.

The County Council's own letter seeking further information from the applicant was more than 30 pages in length.

It is inconceivable and arrogant in the extreme to believe that enough, or indeed many working people and families in a community such as St Dennis would be able to access, study and digest the important information contained in the response in the time given.

It is not enough to tick the box of offering "consultation" if the practicalities of the process are so flawed they render it invalid. It indicates a gross disregard for local people's opinion.

SITA Language And Presentation

SITA Response Inaccuracies

S.T.I.G. believes that people are being asked to assess and support an incomplete and variously flawed application that contains many errors.

There is a catalogue of inaccuracies throughout the whole document. These are listed in detail elsewhere in our submission.

Most of the information contained in the response document is of a technical or regulatory nature.

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Much of it is difficult to follow due to the language used to explain findings and supporting evidence.

It contains complex, scientific and historic data. There is much use of abbreviations and jargon.

There is obtuse, at times random or inadequate cross-referencing and little simple explanation.

While it is appreciated that the response is being considered by agencies who will be familiar with this type of presentation, the consultation process was also meant to embrace local lay people and so, especially given the amount of detail and intricacy of some of the issues, an attempt should have been made to couch the presentation in less convoluted terminology to aid understanding.

As it is, on top of seeking the answers, many of the clarifications need initial deciphering and expert counsel sought to try and work out what exactly the applicant was saying.

Whilst it is appreciated that mistakes can be made with this amount of technical and complex data, S.T.I.G. believes that it should be incumbent upon the applicant to correct and clarify all such errors before the application moves further forward.

It is also noted that in the majority of incidences the inaccuracies 'favour' the applicant's case and in some incidences include some blatant manufacturing of evidence to support the proposal.

A case in point is the use of photo montages, where viewpoints are incorrectly positioned and labelled.

There are inconsistencies in the lines showing the extent of the planning permission and visual treatments mislead the eye about the substance of both landscape and the proposed buildings.

Use of camera lens such as zoom focusing does not give a true representation of what the human eye might see and there are also many discrepancies about the placing and visibility of the stack on the montages.

With the blatant use of distracting and 'trick of the eye' images such as trees and telegraph poles etc. all these montages are biased in favour of reducing the visual impact of the incinerator plant and chimney

Disregard For Liaison And Local People's Opposition

The principles of democracy are not being observed or any attempt made to make them seen to be upheld.

The way the consultation process has been conducted and the lack of integrity in SITA's approach to its response is indicative of how it has failed to conduct any

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satisfactory engagement with local people, both via its 'liaison' group and its acknowledgement of the level of local opposition.

The liaison group meetings were arranged and funded by SITA, via a public relations agency.

The group's constitution was determined with a bias in favour of SITA's position.

The meetings were held outside St Dennis, in a neighbouring parish, whose councillors, until very recently, were not allowed to be members.

The membership was made up of at least 50% SITA full or part-time employees.

There was enthusiastic take-up of free trips and hospitality to the group.

The meetings were 'closed' and no press allowed.

Criticism of SITA was prevented by the Chair and one member was expelled for persisting.

Both the views of individuals and groups have been ignored in the consultative process with not even the slightest attempt at courtesy to acknowledge their interest or concern.

One resident of La Mount Treviscoe had to learn from the proposal documentation that a 2.5 metre barrier be erected around his home.

The views of more than 70% of local people in the neighbouring parish of St.Enoder have been ignored. They registered their opposition to a single incinerator in Mid Cornwall in the questionnaire for the St.Enoder Parish Plan.

Cornwall County Council

The applicant refers to being 'steered' to confine considerations of various aspects of their application to areas, both physical and strategic, determined by officers of Cornwall County Council.

Examples of these are detailed in the relevant areas of our response document. Some of these 'steers' are in direct contradiction to previously agreed areas and strategies.

Therefore it is of concern that CCC have contributed to the applicant's single-minded approach to proposing the incinerator and could therefore be perceived as being complicit in them not being of a mind to explore better alternatives.

With the ruling administration having a majority on all committees, including planning, it is of particular concern that they tried to change policy of the Regional Spatial Strategy during the consultation. These changes would have removed reasons for the application for an incinerator to be refused.