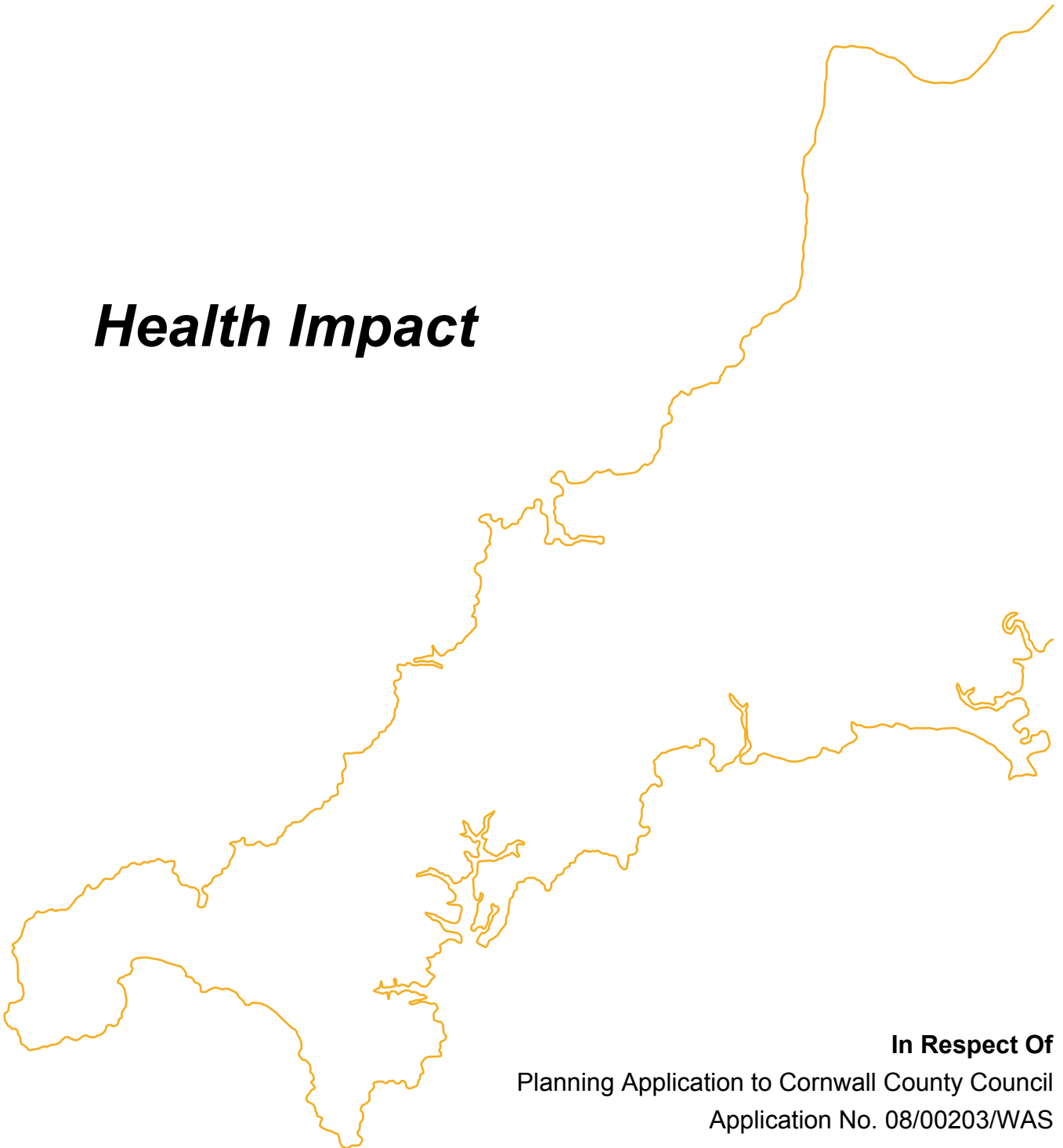




# Consultee Response to SITA Additional Information

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

## *Health Impact*



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

## Health Impact

"pollutants are not expected to cause any significant impact on human health"

This statement from SITA's planning application lacks an important caveat, and perhaps a more sincere applicant would have stated, "**Barring accident, breakdown, mechanical failure, human error or burning the 'wrong' sort of rubbish.....**"

Even the most trusting of people would have trouble believing all the claims made by SITA about their incinerator - if something sounds too good to be true, it's usually because it is.

In SITA's world nothing ever goes wrong and people and environments are never put at risk.

Book half an hour of internet time at your local community library and 'Google' "health effects of incineration" and see just how many 'hits' you get. There is a substantial amount of validated research that should give even the most blinkered 'burner hugger' pause for thought (and 33,000 Doctors across Europe can't all be mis-informed).

Time and time again pollution from industrial processes and transportation are shown to have adverse effects on the people who experience it - workers and residents alike.

Clay Country has an environment severely affected by such pollution and it seems both perverse and unfair to attempt to increase its pollution burden.

Clay Country is an area of high social deprivation. Local health is already poor - childhood asthma is the highest in the county - and it is unlikely to improve if this proposal is allowed to come to fruition.

There can be little doubt that both planning officers and councillors are only too aware that the proposed site for SITA's Mass Burn Incinerator is in breach of local, regional and national policies.

As a "**Material Consideration**", the public's perception of the possible health effects of any major planning application must be shown due diligence and their fears given the full consideration they deserve. As far as the Cornwall Mass Burn Incinerator is concerned, these measures seem sadly lacking.

The people of St. Dennis and Treviscoe feel severely let down by those purporting to be the guardians of their health. Fears are dismissed as insignificant and risks as minimal.

In close-knit rural communities such as these, illness or death may touch **one** but they are felt by **all**.

## Health Impact

The 'Health Protection Agency' seems a singular misnomer.

As a body, their role is one of public health protection, and yet it would appear that they do not conduct or even commission their own research, rather they seem content to form opinions based on biased information supplied to them by companies like SITA. This does not engender local residents with a sense of being protected.

The Primary Care Trust is also dismissive of the public's fears - choosing for the most part to 'rubber-stamp' the conclusions of the HPA, which only serves to make residents question the absence of a duty of care and wonder if the Hippocratic Oath of "first do no harm" has been replaced with the mantra of profit first, people second.

Ignoring the districts existing high levels of respiratory illness (including Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease and asthma) heart disease and cancers, incidences of which could escalate with the addition of the combined emissions from increased HGV traffic and the incineration process itself, the only area that the PCT has chosen to identify, is that of the possible **psychological effects** experienced by those people living near to an incinerator.

Cornwall has a large number of sufferers of depression. Since the announcement that St. Dennis was the 'preferred site' a number of villagers have sought medical help for the anxiety arising from their concerns, and are now on medication. Many have fears regarding the health of their children or grandchildren. Worries about a child with asthma needing to have more time away from school because of increased air pollution, lead on to concerns that their job may be lost due to persistent absences while attempting to be a good parent.

Just as many fear for their jobs at food processing plants - if no-one wants to buy Cornish food where will that leave them?

SITA's response to that was that "fear of the unknown produces anxiety about the incinerator".

Having finally seen a visual representation of the stack height, how many more people around Cornwall are anxious now?

In fact, it is fear of the possible that induces such anxiety. That and the knowledge that SITA (or incinerator firms in general) do not possess the best of records when it comes to the safe-guarding of human environments.

St. Dennis is not alone with regard to these fears - throughout the world individuals, groups and respected organizations campaign for the use of cleaner and more environmentally benign ways of dealing with waste.

## Health Impact

The Philippines have gone so far as to ban all incinerators under their "clean air act" and - with a new broom in the White House - will the U.S be far behind?

The American Medical Association has called for all medical students to be trained in the health effects of toxic exposures, stating that, "all Physicians should be fully trained in human environmental health, and the effects of industrial chemical pollutants and the injury they can cause us - including cancers ".

SITA consistently ignores the reality of St. Dennis, using 'generic' this and 'standardised' that - even our weather is not worth considering.

Pre-existing pollution or health conditions are dismissed as unimportant or 'unlikely' to be exacerbated by the addition of a Mass Burn Incinerator to the environmental mix.

Where such a major development is concerned, and one that has far reaching consequences for at least the term of the 30 year contract (excluding all the toxins emitted that bio-accumulate and do not break down over time), all data used in applications and considerations should be site specific. Only then is it likely that accurate effects can be judged and informed decisions made.

Despite questions being raised in a number of forums, as to the likely effects of interaction/co-mingling of existing pollution with incinerator emissions in human environment terms, SITA has yet to adequately answer these concerns. They continue to disregard the particular micro-climate of St. Dennis and how this will play a significant role in emission dispersion.

The have also neglected the fact that the **ozone** of St. Dennis is 'poor'.

Ozone is vital in the stratosphere but a dangerous pollutant at ground level.

Ozone irritates the lungs and makes them more vulnerable to other chemicals.

The relative calm of a heat wave allows tiny bits of heavy metals, sulphates, nitrates and other substances to accumulate in the air.

These particulates of PM2.5 microns and smaller, infiltrate the body's natural respiratory filters causing a variety of lung problems and raising the risk of heart attacks.

After decades focusing on other pollutants, scientists have only recently learned how deadly fine particulate matter can be.

Climate change may well see the severity and number of heatwaves the planet experiences increase.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has estimated that mortality increases by 0.3% during low-level ozone episodes.

## Health Impact

**The WHO's Global Burden of Disease Project estimates that 100,000 deaths a year in Europe may be related to fine particulates.**

The world-wide heat wave of 2003 saw people dying in large numbers across Europe - 13,000 in France; 1,300 in Portugal; 8,600 in Spain; 4,600 in the Netherlands; 1,000 in Germany; 900+ in Switzerland and 20,000 in Italy.

**Can it really just be mere co-incidence that these countries also happen to utilise incineration to treat their waste?**

The scientific evidence that incineration process emissions have a damaging effect on human health may not be ideal or complete, but while doubts remain, the **precautionary principle** should prevail.

This principle, as defined by the United Nations Rio Declaration, involves taking precautions **now** to avoid possible environmental damage **or** harm to human health in the **future**, even if the scientific basis for taking such precautions may be inconclusive.

Given the sensitivity of both the human and ecological environment of St. Dennis and the surrounding area, it is imperative that the precautionary principle be upheld.

The issues raised here, are in response to CCC's Regulation 19 request for further information, and should not be read in isolation.

S.T.I.G. maintains its objection to SITA's planning application as set out in our full response documents previously submitted as consultees.