

Community Liaison Group

Wednesday 16th April 2025 (6-8pm)

Questions submitted in advance

MVV have cleared a large part of the woods along New Bridge Lane. Will all the wood be cleared or are their plans to incorporate what is left into landscaping and screening?

Only those trees that impede construction or operation have been removed and the remaining trees will form part of the final landscaping and screening.

Why can't MVV get access to the Medworth site directly from the A47 into New Bridge Lane?

Direct access from the A47 was explored in the early stages of the planning process but was deemed unsuitable by National Highways, who did not want an additional roundabout on the A47.

Questions from the floor

Andy Houghton (AH) was asked to outline arrangements for the visit to MVV's Devonport facility:

At a previous meeting, MVV offered to fund a visit to Plymouth, for Wisbech Community Liaison Group members to tour the Devonport facility and learn more about the process and environment.

This will visit include group transport and overnight accommodation (bed and breakfast rate), with lunch at the facility, for a maximum of 48 people on a first-come, first-served basis.

Travel to Plymouth will be on Tuesday, September 9th (2025), with the tour, lunch and return travel on Wednesday 10th September. The collection and drop-off point will be the Queen Mary Centre car park.

The deadline for trip reservations is Friday 13th June and full details, including Health & Safety requirements and a booking form, are available in a dedicated trip pack from Alan Wheeldon.

The biggest investment for residents' is their house but concerns for the proximity of the facility received an incomplete response at the previous meeting. Is there anything more that PC can add?

The situation is the same for non-MVV developments and, whilst house prices do drop initially, they recover. The Plymouth development evidences this and

we would be happy to ask an independent estate agent, near the Devonport facility, if they have verification data available from the 2012-2015 period.

The Plymouth site has had significant smell/odour for some time.

(nb. This was a statement, not a question)

This is simply not true and no odour complaints have been raised in 2025.

- Some complaints have been received previously about smoke from the chimney (which is actually water vapour) and noise (which is actually from the adjacent dockyards).
- When the Devonport facility first became operational, there was a short period where odour was a concern but that was soon resolved.
- PC requested the source of the information and queried its accuracy or any reliance on it.
- (Subsequently) From a Google search, the particular odour issue was resolved in 2016.

Is there any odour?

No

There are reports of residue on washing in local homes, is this true?

No

How can you generate power from incineration without producing odour?

Because we design the facility that way, so that we can deal with waste (that does have an odour).

So, there's no guarantee there'll be no odour.

(nb. This was statement, not a question)

What guarantee would you like? We recommend that you attend the trip and experience it for yourself, rather than taking my word for it.

Do you live near a facility?

Not personally. But a number of the MVV team do. Jane Ford lives within 500m of the Devonport site, with no odour issues or concerns. Again, I recommend visiting the site, as part of the arranged tour, to see for yourself.

There are regular complaints from residents about the Plymouth facility, evidence on 'Plymouth Live'.

(nb. This was statement, not a question)

(Response from Jade Beavan, Community Liaison Manager at Devonport)

There is one persistent local complainant who is entirely at odds with the vast majority of local residents.

- We have people living within 50m of the development who regularly (positively) engage with us
- All complaints (and positive comments) are recorded

- All communication is reported on a monthly basis, as part of our contract with the local authority
- We have received zero complaints in the last two months

(Response from Tim Marks, Head of Planning)

For further assurance, for the Medworth facility, we are required by Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and the Environment Agency (EA) to have an odour management plan in place. This will require monthly monitoring data to be submitted to the EA, with results published annually and made publicly available.

When did the Plymouth facility open?

2015

The facility in Plymouth is not on the same scale (as Wisbech) – (quote) ‘mega incinerator is the biggest in Europe’
(nb. This was statement, not a question)

The Wisbech facility is bigger, since it has two lines to Plymouth’s one. But the basic process is exactly the same. That’s what you’ll see on the Devonport tour, when you’ll be able to ask questions with staff working there.

Why don’t you live next to an incinerator?

Where I live isn’t relevant but, as it happens, my home is 20 minutes away from a facility. As already stated, a number of MVV staff live near to our Devonport site.

What positives are there?

Join the tour and meet the residents – ask them, rather than asking me to speak for them. They recognise the need for the facility and the Plymouth site is right in the middle of town, not on the outskirts like in Wisbech. It’s about 64m to the nearest flats.

Incineration and Energy from Waste (EfW) have become a necessary part of our infrastructure.

Will you be burning waste from Europe?

No, absolutely not. And we are actually helping to prevent waste being exported from the UK.

Why is a facility twice the size of Plymouth's being built in the middle of a crop area, with no explanation for the access (state of roads) provided?

This has been explained in detail previously, including via Public Meetings and the Development Consent Order (DCO).

There are other areas that could absorb the build and access areas and the 250 lorries per day.

(nb. This was statement, not a question)

The full, appropriate planning process was followed, across 2023-24, and the Medworth facility will be built: all associated documents are in the public domain. Everything that has been raised today was considered at that time.

There are concerns for local roads and orchards.

(nb. This was statement, not a question)

The Highways Agency has stated that there will be minimum impact on roads.

Environmental studies have been carried out as part of the process and there are no concerns for the orchards.

Are the lorries going to run day and night?

The facility gate hours will be 7am to 8pm and no lorries will come through Wisbech.

What will happen when Guyhirn is closed because there's been an accident?

The lorries will either wait or turn round and go back to their depot. The contracts we set up will not allow any lorries to travel by other routes. Operators nowadays have intensive tracking of their drivers including where they go, when they stop and how fast they are travelling.

Previously you have said to rely on local people to report road issues.

(nb. This was statement, not a question)

I didn't say to reply on local people, I said that was an option that was open to them. There are already lorries travelling on the A47 from Bedford that come through Wisbech. We will not allow that with our contracts and, remember, these are lorries that are already on the roads – we're not adding to them, we're reducing the distances they travel.

Is the Section 111 funding £200K per annum?

Yes. Not the 106 funding. The annual £200K is for local purposes, managed via an external agency (Cambridgeshire Community Fund). The legal agreement is currently being drafted but it will be tightly defined to this area. The first payment is due in the next few months and before full construction starts.

How does that compare to MVV funding in other towns?

Kent and Dundee have no community fund, Plymouth is the same as Wisbech.

Can you confirm that lorry traffic will come from a 200 mile radius?

No, 200 miles doesn't sound familiar. We have stated a two-hour drive radius; more detail is provided in the Waste Fuel Availability Assessment which was thoroughly scrutinised and updated during the Examination process. A closing position statement on waste need was also provided at the end of the Examination.

There will be overlap with other incinerators – eg. Boston which will be only 35 miles away.

(nb. This was statement, not a question)

If Boston is built, all waste will be brought to it by water but the forecast one million tonnes of waste per annum is unlikely to be achieved. Which suggests there would be no need for any overlap or trucks coming from there to Wisbech.

What about lorries from the Peterborough incinerator, which is even closer?

Local Authorities have the contracts for waste management. For example, CCC are contracted to Thalia and Norfolk are contracted to a site in Bedfordshire. They pay for the transport to facilities, so they have a vested interest in using the nearest sites, with the lowest gate fees, simply because it reduces costs.

Our local road systems are the only ones nationally with no motorway. If there's an accident on the A47, and roads are shut or diversions put in place, where will these extra lorries go?

This question has already been answered. Drivers will be expected to wait or go back. Our contracts will pointedly state that the site can only be accessed via the A47 and Cromwell Road. And these are not additional trucks – they are already on the roads, going to landfill, for example.

What about trucks coming along the A17?

We won't use the A17. Our contracts will be binding on drivers not to come through Wisbech and all journeys are expected to be evidenced via GPS and tachographs.

Following the Paris and Netherlands incidents, what steps are being taken to minimise the risk of explosion or fire?

We are not aware of the incidents referred to; the tour would be the best way to evidence our approach to safety.

We do get explosions – for example, when gas bottles aren't removed from the waste by councils, prior to it being delivered to us. For some reason, Dundee has a higher number of bottles but there is value in the metal.

Our furnaces are designed to cope; in Plymouth, we once had a hand grenade go into the incinerator.

I don't know of any EfW facility that has blown up. About 20 years ago, one facility was closed due to operator (human) error but modern computer and monitoring systems don't allow that particular issue to happen. Come to Plymouth!

Will you have a residential liaison audit group – not council run?

We have a dedicated, local Community Liaison Manager (AH) and visits to the site or facility can be arranged at any practical time. There will be internal and external audits to maintain our accreditation to quality, energy, environmental, safety and procedural standards.

I used to build lorries and I know that the rear seals go. Do you have any concerns for slurry run-off?

I can't really answer that. In Plymouth, we rarely need to stop a truck from entering the site due to seal issues and we don't accept slurry. We have, previously, taken sewage waste but only as a very dry material (which has high calorific value).

Why was Wisbech chosen for the site? Is it because it's the dump of the Fens?

Wisbech wasn't chosen because it's a tip. We have another planning application for a facility on Bournemouth and Poole – that's certainly not a poor or deprived area. The Defra report, showing areas of the UK which are currently under capacity for residual waste treatment, has been circulated with these notes.

Why are there incinerators in Peterborough and Wisbech but not in King's Lynn?

That's a question for the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, not MVV.

Is £6 per person from the Community Fund a fair amount?

The fund was agreed, via the relevant planning process, with CCC. You would need to speak with them if there are any issues about the amounts being made available.

Fenland District Council completely refused to discuss the community fund or to have any input. Again, you would need to ask them why and how that is of benefit to local people.

What is the procedure if there is any smell or businesses are inconvenienced?

We will have a 24hr control room and a 24hr contact number, which will allow for almost immediate response. But that depends on it being us – for example, other factories nearby regularly produce odour and, of course, we can't do anything about that.

Why do you need to use Algores Way so much?

We are expanding/widening New Bridge Lane. That will then become the main access route, as much as possible.

Solicitor's comment about the ownership of Algores Way...

The site end of Algores Way is not a public highway. That has been confirmed via Fenland District Council and has nothing to do with MVV or the development.

When will the Air Quality Monitoring System (AQMS) at Thomas Clarkson Academy be started and the results published?

The TCA installation will be completed prior to construction commencing (likely before September) and reporting will be an item on the Operator Led Liaison Group that is being set up with statutory bodies and is expected to run quarterly.

(Additional detail from TM)

Reporting will be to BCKL&WN and FDC with real time access designed in. This feeds into the existing monitoring system and is in line with EA requirements.

Can you provide any details of the zephyr monitoring in Wisbech?

All monitoring is outlined in the monitoring strategy. For Plymouth (and our other operational facilities), chimney emissions are reported weekly; the community (off site) NO_x monitoring was reported quarterly for ten years from the start of operation and particulate monitoring for five years, but the equipment was installed prior to operation (as is the case for Wisbech) to enable comparisons to be made.

Was TCA chosen for the AQMS to allay parental fears and is there just one monitoring point?

No. The TCA location allows for prevailing winds and the school is interested in curriculum use of the data.

(Additional detail from TM)

The TCA station provides baseline (control) monitoring. There is additional and more robust monitoring via zephyr stations (which are attached to lampposts), with one in Walsoken and a further six at various locations around Wisbech and the surrounding villages.

Where can we get the EA information and requirements?

(Response from TM)

The approved scheme is on the MVV (Medworth) and the relevant pages of the CCC websites.

When will the EA survey be carried out?

(Response from TM)

It's not actually a survey – it's a scheme which will be in place for at least eight years. Background monitoring for baseline data was started two years ago and allows for comparison to national data. All relevant documents are available via the Planning Inspectorate who report to the Secretary of State.

These studies were carried out during Covid, with lower transport levels and lower population.

(nb. This was statement, not a question)

The surveys were all accepted as being valid, with the last one submitted in August, 2022. The examination ended in August, 2023, and outcomes came available in March, 2024.

(Additional detail from TM)

All national major infrastructure projects were acknowledged to have had traffic drops. The Highways Authority and other regulatory authorities agreed the approach and the outcomes were effectively balanced to allow for Covid.

For the plant to be efficient, how many tonnes of inflammable material are need?

There isn't actually any need for flammable material. From cold, we use oil (diesel) to heat the combustion chamber; once we're at temperature and waste has been fed onto the grate and caught fire, we turn the oil off. The only fuel then is waste. If we need to shut the facility down, we turn off the waste and use the oil burners to maintain a core temperature; this enables the waste on the grate to be burnt off at the required temperature.

The volume of waste needed to maintain efficiency is from 550-626K tonnes per annum. Around 5K tonnes per calendar month, at most.

I am pleased about the checks near schools but I am worried about toxins. I'm a severe asthma sufferer and people have said that toxins will spread across a 25 mile diameter of the facility. There are arable crops in that area and we grow our own fruit and veg.

(nb. This was statement, not a question)

I can assure you that your fears are unfounded. Dioxins, heavy metals, etc are a part of life and our Emissions Policy is tightly managed by the EA. Come to Plymouth and talk to the primary school that is only 100m from the entrance to our facility there.

(Additional detail from TM)

Human health risk assessment takes the worst-case scenario for emissions – eg. for someone who lives near a facility, grows their own food, rears their own animals. The air quality assessment confirmed there is no risk.

A lecturer at Newcastle University is an air pollution expert and carbon capture enthusiast. A recent Commons briefing signalled that the Government would take appropriate measures against emissions. Does MVV agree to carbon capture?

Yes, but an effective, industrial carbon capture plant requires very large equipment. The technology is evolving and the biggest challenge is what to do with the carbon at the end of the process. Currently, to avoid it being released into the atmosphere, a leading option is to build a pipeline and pump the carbon into empty gas fields. A further Development Consent Order would be required for that pipeline.

Isn't the 106 agreement now a 111 agreement?

(Response from TM)

They are two separate things: The 106 is a direct, mitigating requirement, whilst the 111 is an agreement to provide community funding for local benefit.

(Additional information from PC)

The 106 payments are made to CCC, the first £200K of £400K total has already been paid. This is ringfenced for 'Non-Motorised User' (NMU) improvements in the local area. This will include parts of Norfolk (in particular, Walsoken) with consultations involving relevant Parish Councils to decide where/how to spend

the money. The 111 will be managed by an independent agency – Cambridgeshire Community Foundation – and is £200K per year, index-linked, for the lifetime of the facility. That fund, again, is wholly limited to beneficial activity in the immediate vicinity of the facility.

If nothing toxic will come out of the chimneys, why are they 90m high?

Anything that comes out of the chimney is concentrated at the point it leaves. We take into account things like ambient weather conditions and a generally prevailing south westerly wind. The chimney height is calculated to provide the appropriate distribution. The Environmental Permit governs this but we're working to much lower levels than are permitted.

Are there filters (like muslin) at the top of the chimneys?

No, we changed our process about five years ago. The filters are 16m long and made from Gortex. There are around three thousand of them per line and they work like Hoover bags in reverse, as they collect particles on the outside.

Can you state categorically that there will be no particles escaping from the chimney?

No, we can't say for certain that there will be zero particles. But we will be working well below the safe level set.

Will the air quality monitoring stop after six years?

(Response from JB)

It's a different situation but off-site monitoring in Plymouth has recently ended (after a period of ten years) because the local authority doesn't require it anymore, this is in line with the planning agreement.

(Additional information from PC)

We measure differential pressure across the filter bags, which are before the chimney in the process, to detect cell issues and any need to replace bags. There is constant monitoring of emissions at the chimney.

What hazardous waste will you be taking?

We don't accept hazardous waste.

But Plymouth does accept hazardous waste.

(nb. This was statement, not a question)

No, it doesn't. We don't accept anything identified as hazardous waste under the standard classification.

It states on the internet that your Plymouth facility takes hazardous waste – including medical waste.

(nb. This was statement, not a question)

(Response from JB)

There is another facility, near the hospital in Plymouth, that accepts medical waste. It's not an MVV facility.

What comes out of the chimney? Is it steam?

It's not steam – as mentioned earlier, what you can see is actually water vapour.