

10 January 2012

Secretary of State

**URGENT CONFIDENTIAL**

Dear Secretary of State

As you will know, the process concerning this Authority's proposal for a power and recycling plant at the Saddlebow site in King's Lynn has been a very lengthy and protracted one, not without controversy at times, as all such proposals are.

Throughout this process, we have worked closely with your department on all aspects of this matter and have been very grateful for the help and advice we have received.

In the past twelve months you have twice sought further evidence from the Authority about the level of continuing support for Norfolk's Joint Municipal Waste Strategy. Each of those requests have, unsurprisingly, generated a substantial level of publicity in Norfolk. On each occasion we have been pleased to provide the requested evidence, at the same time of course, it has been open to all the Norfolk authorities who are signatories to the strategy but wished to change their approach to advise you accordingly.

I know Borough Council colleagues in King's Lynn have taken the relevant opportunity to lodge strong opposition to the Authority's proposal for Saddlebow as they are entitled to do.

However, Norwich City Council has not chosen to do so, until yesterday, prompted by campaigners and following the recent media reports of emerging intelligence of your likely intentions.

The facts of the matter are that on 26 September 2011, the City Council re-confirmed its support for the nine objectives in the Norfolk Municipal Waste strategy, as did all the authorities in Norfolk. On 29 November (i.e. even after the publicity concerning your last request for further evidence), the Leader of the City Council was given two public opportunities at a full Council meeting to object to the Saddlebow proposal and indeed the strategy. She did not do so, instead she confirmed the continued active participation of the City Council in the work of the Norfolk Waste Partnership.

A December 2011 meeting of the Norfolk Waste Partnership attended by the Leader of the City Council again provided a similar opportunity for the authority to register any opposition, it did not do so.

Finally, it is significant, as an indicator of the actual position of the City Council, that it has chosen to register 'no comment' in its response to the planning consultation on the Willows proposal.

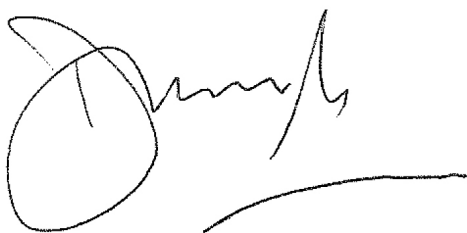
We have been given every expectation that after this very lengthy process, your decision on the award of Norfolk's PFI Credits is imminent. Indeed, as you will know, we learnt from the Norfolk media at the end of last week that a meeting had taken place between yourself and Henry Bellingham MP. Liz Truss MP confirmed publically the MP's expectation that an announcement was indeed imminent and likely to be confirmation of Norfolk's credit award.

You will understand my concerns that this coverage then prompted a subsequent sudden flurry of lobbying over the past weekend from King's Lynn campaigners and others over the past weekend to apply pressure to the Leader of Norwich City Council in this election year. At such a very late stage and after such a gruelling and rigorous examination of the evidence, such an obvious and calculated 'spoiler' should not be allowed to override the facts of the matter as have been so comprehensively scrutinised by your officials against your own evaluation criteria.

We, and indeed the relevant consortium hope and would now expect to hear your decision shortly, not least of all as the normal timetable for approval of Final Business Case is two weeks.

We believe we have provided sufficient evidence to assure you that the Norfolk proposal meets the criteria necessary to release the PFI credits. We look forward to this major infrastructure project in Norfolk helping the Government deliver its waste management objectives and its own commitment to the national improvement of core infrastructure.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Derrick Murphy', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Derrick Murphy  
Leader  
Norfolk County Council