



## **ASA uphold complaints against SITA, for misleading Shepperton 'Eco Park' marketing material**

*SITA reliability and technology claims unfounded*

October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011 –The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) Council have upheld three out of five complaints made by a Shepperton resident of 30 years, against the October 2010 'Eco Park' Newsletter. SITA claim the gasification facility planned for the densely populated area would use “proven technology” and that the reference sites were “operating successfully”.

The original ASA decision in May 2011 upheld one complaint made by Tracy Harris pertaining to misleading imagery depicting the planned development. However, following an independent review, of those findings, the ASA Council have now upheld two more of the original complaints for “misleading advertising, substantiation and environmental Claims”. The report also states; *“that the decision to not uphold the complaints on Point 2 (proven technology) and Point 3 (operating successfully) was flawed on the basis that the plants are not like for like in terms of input waste, output levels and emissions and because the reference plants have both experienced issues with successful operation.”*

SITA had previously indicated that the design would be a prototype and the first of its kind, which underlies the fact that what is planned for Shepperton is not tried and tested technology. This is further endorsed by point 12.2 of the October 2011 consultation from the Department of Energy & Climate Change, concerning Renewable Obligations for 2013-17 that describes gasification as:

*“ . . . emerging and unproven technologies for the treatment of waste biomass and mixed municipal waste where there are number of technical issues to resolve, for example, achieving intended throughput and air emission standards. “*

Now a member of Spelthorne against the Eco Park (SATEP), Ms Harris and other members of the group have fought a long campaign to bring SITA to book.

Speaking after the revised ASA ruling: Ms Harris said she was “very pleased” with the outcome, but indicated that she remained concerned that SITA had continued to convey similar misleading information to the wider public in subsequent material, community liaison and planning meetings. “Had residents been made aware of the real implications this facility will bring to Spelthorne, I am sure SITA would have faced far greater opposition than they have”.

Fellow SATEP Member and Shepperton resident Malcolm Robertson shared these views, adding; “Due to the SITA company policy of not holding large public meetings, the majority of their public consultation has been conducted through awareness-raising tools such as Newsletters, their website, media articles and other marketing materials. However, with this ASA ruling deeming SITA's publicity material as disingenuous at a basic level, it is our view that their claims to have held satisfactory public consultations be declared null and void”



SATEP have requested that the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government declines planning permission on a number of counts, not least because SITA's own R1 incinerator efficiency calculation indicates the proposal fails the Revised Waste Framework Directive.

SATEP also argued that 'very special circumstances' were not demonstrated when Surrey County Councils' Planning Committee approved the application for this hazardous waste processing plant to be built on greenbelt land.

Chris Netherclift, also of SATEP, stated: "This matter is highly emotive, and has even been raised in the House of Commons as the subject of an Adjournment Debate. The ASA have shown that on a number of counts, SITA have misled the people of Spelthorne over the proposed development, from the imagery, to the technology description and the reliability of the reference sites. The whole consultation process, and decision of the planning authorities must therefore be called into question, and SATEP is urging the Secretary of State refuse this wholly inappropriate proposal."

- Ends -

Additional References:

ASA Rulings: <http://www.asa.org.uk/ASA-action/Adjudications.aspx>

SATEP and additional information: <http://satep.co.uk>.

DECC: <http://www.decc.gov.uk/assets/decc/11/consultation/ro-banding/3235-consultation-ro-banding.pdf>

SATEP is part of a national network of more than 80 groups opposing incineration in the UK. [www.ukwin.org.uk](http://www.ukwin.org.uk)

Points of Contact:

[www.cvra.co.uk](http://www.cvra.co.uk)

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