

Waste management park scoops top planning award

Donarbon Ltd, of Waterbeach near Cambridge, and Cambridgeshire County Council have won an award in a prestigious national competition for their work to reduce climate change through good planning. This is the first time a waste facility has ever won such an accolade at the Royal Town Planning Institute National Award ceremony, held this year at the Hilton Hotel in London on Thursday 7th February.

Every year the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI - the professional body for planners) holds a competition aimed at recognising both the diversity of land use planning activity and looking to highlight innovation, best practise and delivery of projects, plans, partnerships and initiatives.

The County Council and Donarbon jointly entered the development of a large waste management park, including a new Mechanical Biological Waste Treatment plant, at Waterbeach to increase recycling and composting of waste in the Climate Change category of the RTPI National Awards for Planning. The entry sought to highlight the move away from landfill towards a more carbon friendly future through increased recycling and recovery of waste at this site.

The RTPI panel were impressed with the excellent engagement there had been with the local community over the plans for the development of the Waste Management Park, and they highlighted the use of a new design guide produced by the County Council to improve the look and quality of major waste facilities. The guide is a first in the UK.

Judges visited the Donarbon site, quizzed officers from the County Council and Donarbon and were able



to see the innovative 3D images of the proposed new plant developed by Donarbon’s architects, RPS Burks Green.

They heard how this large project passed through its planning application stages quickly and without opposition, largely due to the joint partnership encouraging local people to engage with the planning system through a series of manned exhibitions, and of the community liaison initiatives undertaken by the parties to inform the public about waste issues through open days and visits. In their comments the judges said “Of particular note is the way in which the waste planning authority and the operator have gone about the provision of these facilities”.

They also examined how the new design guide helped to speed up the process in the development of the planned new Mechanical and Biological Waste Treatment plant to be built at the site.

Sarah Clover, Director of Business Development at Donarbon Ltd. said,

“We were proud just to be shortlisted for this award, as we think that this is the first time a waste facility has been shortlisted by the RTPI, let alone won. This award has come from partnership working with the County Council, and a strong commitment within Donarbon to tackling the problems of waste and consulting with the local community before we go ahead with any developments on our site”.

David Atkinson, Minerals and Waste Planning Manager for Cambridgeshire County Council, said: “Cambridgeshire is committed to reducing landfill and tackling climate change by encouraging reduction, reusing and recycling of rubbish. The County Council is doing their part by leading the country in producing a new guide designed to create better quality and environmentally friendly waste facilities. Donarbon has worked hard in partnership with us to engage with the local community about their plans to build this modern facility which will increase recycling and reduce the tonnes of rubbish that currently ends up in landfill.”