

30th June 2021

To:

Councillors and Senior Officers at WSCC and ADC

MPs: Nick Gibb, Gillian Keegan and Andrew Griffith

Directors at Grundon/Viridor,

RE: GRUNDON / VIRIDOR, ENERGY RECOVERY FACILITY (ERF), FORD

This letter sets out the West Sussex Growers' Association's (WSGA) interest in the above proposed development. Through the capture of waste heat, this ERF has the potential to support a significant amount of new, high tech, horticultural glasshouses in the immediate area.

WSGA members include major commercial growers in the Arun and Chichester Districts. These businesses make a major contribution to the local economy, producing crops with a value of over £1billion per annum and employing more than 10,000 full-time staff.

UK Horticulture is facing both challenges and opportunities in terms of environmental sustainability and food security. The industry is focused on reducing food-miles and carbon emissions and increasing the UK supply of fresh produce to the home market. Currently, more than 75% of the fresh UK market is met by imports.

Sustainable food production and low carbon-energy are inextricably linked. Producing high quality fresh produce in glasshouses requires year-round inputs of heat and energy. Low carbon energy from projects such as this ERF gives home-grown crops the edge required to displace imports. As such, 'Horticultural Production and Energy Hubs' are now attracting significant investment UK wide.

The proposed ERF at Ford includes Combined Heat and Power (CHP) technology capable of delivering thermal energy to the local area at a level that would fully satisfy the heat requirements for glasshouse developments at commercial scale. The close proximity and small number of commercial growers involved in a potential partnership would also be highly attractive to the ERF operator, in terms of efficiency of infrastructure, finance, operational and management requirements.

The carbon assessment for the ERF predicts a significant net reduction in greenhouse gas emissions based on the capture of power alone. Partnering with the local Horticultural Industry to use surplus heat would support sustainable food production and allow the ERF to reach its full potential in terms of carbon benefits.

Taking into account the existing and planned developments at Ford; there is sufficient suitable land available to develop new glasshouses surrounding HM Prison, Southern Waters' site and the proposed ERF site. Such horticultural development would also act as a land-use 'buffer' which would benefit residential developments proposed nearby.

Based on the above, WSGA have consulted with its membership and established serious interest from several major horticultural businesses in developing a potential "Combined Horticultural Production and Energy Hub" partnership with the proposed ERF at Ford.

We look forward to discussing these proposals further with all parties and supporting the progression of this project in any way that we can.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Hopkins – Chairman