

The decision by the Secretary of State Caroline Spelman to withhold confirmation of PFI credits to Norfolk for their EfW proposal is both a surprising and unwelcome step.

CIWM understands that the Norfolk Waste Strategy is complete, agreed and recent, and it is not immediately clear what further information or evidence would satisfy the Secretary of State that there is 'wide support' for the Strategy.

It is possible that this is no more than a last minute check on due process. However, if, on the other hand, it is a demand for further consultation or approval of an already agreed strategy, we fear that this could set a precedent for almost any major infrastructure project.

Clearly the Secretary of State feels there are special circumstances pertaining to the Norfolk proposal. However, CIWM warns that this action runs the risk of creating a never ending loop of appeal and consultation that could significantly damage the planning system and the PFI process in the future, and impact negatively on investment in the waste sector.

If Government is serious about green growth, energy and resource security, and a more sustainable future, it needs to be consistent in its approach to delivering essential infrastructure and create confidence in the planning system – this is not the way to deliver that confidence.