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Date: 30 July 2024



Right Honourable Steve Reed, OBE
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Cllr Jane Scullion, Leader
c/o Halifax Town Hall
Crossley Street
Halifax
HX1 1UJ

Dear Mr Reed

We are writing following our recent full Council meeting as requested by Councillors in Calderdale, reflecting a motion and discussion in relation to Incinerators and the danger to human health.

There is a long history associated with the proposed small waste incineration plant (SWIP) at Belmont Industrial Estate in Sowerby Bridge in Calderdale, which started with the Council refusing planning permission. A decision which was then overturned on appeal to the Planning Inspectorate, and in 2021, the then Cabinet granted an environmental permit for the incinerator. This took place following the legal process which included opportunities for residents and other parties to object. Subsequently, objectors successfully secured a judicial review, which concluded with the Cabinet decision to grant the environmental permit being quashed.

The application was then considered by a Planning Inspector who dismissed it and stated: "I am unable to find that granting an environmental permit for the SWIP would not have an unacceptable adverse effect on human health and the environment".

This prolonged process has caused significant distress amongst local residents, who are deeply concerned about the potential impact on human health and the community.

There have been two public consultations in respect of the current application. In response to significant feedback Calderdale Council has asked the applicants to provide more information before making a decision. The receipt and online publication of this additional information will start a further 21-day public consultation.

Tackling climate change is a priority for Calderdale Council, as evidenced in our Climate Action Plan, published in 2023 as a roadmap for action to support reaching net-zero emissions by 2038. It has considerable synergies with the council's 2019 air quality strategy, with measures aimed at achieving net zero also likely to reduce air pollution.



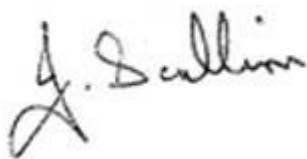
We are aware that in 2021 an assessment by the National Infrastructure Committee warned that the increasing greenhouse gas emissions from waste incineration would hinder the UK's ability to achieve its net-zero targets by 2050. In a subsequent report published in October 2023 they highlighted that to hit net zero the tonnage of waste treated at energy from waste plants without carbon capture and storage will need to reduce by around a quarter by 2035, and by around 80 per cent by 2050.

Moreover, in 2021, the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on air pollution published a synopsis of research presentations on pollution from waste incineration. One researcher found that "even though incinerator filters stop small particulates like PM2.5, they allow ultrafine particulates into the local environment which at scale constitute a significant health hazard." Other research "found heavy metals in the toenails of children living near incinerators linked with childhood leukaemia" and "dioxins in chicken eggs up to 10 kilometres away from incinerators."

On behalf of Calderdale Council we request that you pause current and future applications for waste incinerators, regardless of size or regulatory authority, and carry out a national review of development rules. This review could examine the operation of all current incinerators in the UK; the impacts on human health; impacts on recycling rates; and whether capacity has been reached in terms of national demand for new incinerators. The review could also include consideration of the recent and currently unpublished work by the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) on "the role of waste incineration capacity in the management of residual wastes in England".

As a Council we will do everything within our power to prevent any potential health and environmental impacts that the proposed incinerator could have on the local community and residents (if the environmental permit were to be granted). Moreover, the Council will impose any relevant sanctions on the applicants should the rules stipulated in the environmental permit and Planning application be breached.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Jane Scullion
Calderdale Council Leader



Robin Tuddenham
Chief Executive - Calderdale Council
Place Lead, Calderdale - NHS, West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board