

**Cabinet Meeting: Monday, 13 January 2025**

**Question from: Clive Wilkinson**

**Question to:**

I received an inadequate response to my question of 9th December querying why officers approved an incinerator which would be harmful to human health.

The response was basically that it was governed by a regulatory regime and from fear of court costs from disappointed parties should the application be refused.

Does the cabinet believe that fear of litigation is a good enough reason to compromise the health and safety of Sowerby Bridge residents especially when the said regulatory regime is open to interpretation.

The council have stated that expert consultation was sought, however the experts did not even visit the site, whose topography is one of the critical issues raised by environmental experts.

I also do not believe the unelected council officers who interpreted the regulatory regime had the necessary knowledge or experience in this field.

This was amply demonstrated at the Sowerby Bridge Ward Forum that officers attended on 9th December. The overall impression given was that officers were ill informed, ill prepared, inept and naive. Many members of the audience knew more about the subject than the officers themselves.

So I ask again, does the cabinet believe that fear of litigation is a good enough reason to compromise the health and safety of the residents of Sowerby Bridge, we seem to be the only people not considered in the process - what was the point of a consultation!

**Response**

Consultants CERC carried out a site-specific investigation following the concerns raised by the Planning Inspector. Council Officers have visited the premises numerous times. Bureau Veritas undertook a review of the application and therefore did not require a site visit. Council Officers are adequately qualified to be able to regulate this facility, and have cause to seek support if necessary as and when required, which is typical of the environmental permitting regime.