

**Cabinet Meeting: Monday, 10 February 2025**

**Question from: Clive Wilkinson**

**Question to: Councillor Durrans**

In response to my previous questions to cabinet about the incinerator decision you have said that you were constrained by the government's environmental permitting regime.

However the same regime was in force when the council refused the incinerator at Mearclough for reasons which equally apply at Belmont i.e. NOx levels, nearness to AQMA and conflicts where two regulators manage the same site. In fact there are additional factors which make the Belmont site even less suitable than Mearclough, these being: it is deeper in the valley bottom so prone to inversions, the top of the emission stack is below the nearby road and adjacent houses, it is surrounded by protected woodland, the building housing the incinerator is next to the river Ryburn so at risk of flooding and finally the prevailing wind will blow emissions into the town centre.

The same regulatory regime was also in force when the planning inspector, John Woolcock, refused an EP here last July.

The only difference in this recent application is some additional modelling, which in itself is suspect (as referenced by Bureau Veritas) because of the reliance on weather data from places with a completely different topography to the Ryburn Valley. Also none of the other issues raised by John Woolcock were addressed.

Given all of the above, I cannot see why your officers thought it would be a good idea to approve a permit for an incinerator at this site.

Does the cabinet agree with me that the environmental permit process for this application was flawed, particularly with respect to the health and environment of the population of Sowerby Bridge.

## **Response**

The process that the Council has followed when considering the Small Waste Incineration Permit (SWIP) environmental permit application made by Calder Valley Skip Hire Ltd. is identified within specific legislation and was followed by Council Officers. As part of the process, Officers considered a vast quantity of information, received many comments submitted during a comprehensive multi-phase consultation process, and sought advice on numerous occasions from competent and capable agencies. Consideration was also given to potential impacts on the health of the local population and the environment.