

Cabinet Meeting: Monday, 17 March 2025

Question from: David Pugh

Question to: Councillor Patient, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Climate Action and Housing

QUESTION

I asked the following question on the 11 March 2024:

“The Calderdale Climate Action Plan says: “We want to spread the message of building a brighter Zero Carbon Calderdale.” How does granting a permit to burn 10,000 tonnes of waste a year near an Air Quality Management Area fit into the Climate Action Plan?”

You said you would send me a wider response in writing. I have not had a wider response, is this because there is no mention of incineration in the 76 page Climate Action Plan?

Furthermore is the council supporting or opposing the processing of hazardous waste on the Belmont site in Sowerby Bridge?

Response

Thank you for your question.

Calderdale's Climate Action Plan sets out the actions that the Council and our partners will take between 2023 and 2026 to progress towards our goal to be net zero by 2038 with significant progress by 2030.

The plan has 6 themes:

- Working together to influence decisions.
- Support community action.
- Create warm and resilient buildings.
- Grow a green economy.
- Transform transport and how we get around.
- Work with land and nature to protect us in the long-term.

The plan was informed by scientific evidence provided by the emissions reduction pathway which analysed the specific areas of carbon emissions to be reduced to achieve our net zero goal. This recommended that the following actions should be taken to achieve the goal:

Transport - increase sales of zero emissions cars, increase walking and cycling and increase public transport travel by 50% compared to today

Buildings & Technology - Retrofit 69,000 homes to reach EPC C or better, install 49,000 heat pumps & hybrid heat pumps, develop and deploy hydrogen equipment for select industry and buildings, increase Solar PV and onshore wind reach and invest in electricity infrastructure.

Land Use & Biodiversity – restore peatland, implement 450 hectares of new forest planting, implement diet change to reduce red meat and dairy consumption by 32%

Waste - reduce avoidable food waste by 35% and increase the recycling of municipal waste

The emissions reduction pathway did not recommend actions relating to incinerators

In relation to the Air Quality Management Area, Public Health England submitted a response to the consultation that took place in September 2020 in relation to the the proposed incinerator. They concluded that *“if the installation is operating within emission limits it is unlikely to lead to significant impacts on air quality”*

Calderdale Council welcomes the strengthening of the EWC waste codes as this change affords a higher level of protection to both human health and the environment by ensuring hazardous waste is separated and dealt with in the most appropriate manner.

The changes to the waste codes mean that what was previously a non-hazardous waste stream will now change to what is termed a ‘mirror’ waste code which simply means the waste may or may not be hazardous and must be tested to determine this fact. This change requires additional testing of the waste material and requires separation of any waste deemed hazardous.

Any hazardous waste will be stored separately in a designated area and will be taken off site to an appropriate facility to be dealt with. Testing of the material is proposed to be carried out every 1000 tonnes of waste accepted.

The current permit allowed for metal shredder residues, known as fragmentation fluff, or frag fluff to be accepted under non-hazardous EWC codes 19 10 04 and/or 19 10 16. This practice has ceased and will only begin again with the additional testing regime, as mentioned above, if the variation is granted by the Environment Agency.

It is not for Calderdale Council to either support or oppose the application. It is our role as a statutory consultee to provide advice to the decision maker to assist in ensuring the protection of human health and the environment.

In keeping with existing practice, the Council’s Environmental Health Officers will continue to support and work with the Environment Agency to ensure protection of both human health and the environment.