

Enfield Green Party: Response re new Edmonton incinerator

The North London Waste Authority (NLWA) has invited comments on its proposals for a new incinerator (<http://www.northlondonheatandpower.london/consultation>). Officially this phase of the consultation closed on January 27th. However, since NLWA was one month late in responding to the FoI requests on which we intended to base our response our response has been delayed.

Our view can be stated quite briefly. Incineration is a wasteful and dangerous process which releases toxins into the atmosphere and destroys materials that might be used again. Incineration should be a last resort.

| Waste hierarchy |
|---------------------|
| • Reduce |
| • Reuse |
| • Recycle |
| • Recover (energy). |

Therefore any discussion of waste management should start with the first three Rs of the waste hierarchy. However, it's now widely understood that an ad hoc approach is not enough. Instead we need to move to a **circular economy**; that is, an economy in which products and materials are repeatedly reused. Losses of material would be made up but most needs would be met by recycling and reuse.

Circular economy

We – like most of those involved – want to **move to a circular economy**. The key to achieving a circular economy is design and manufacture for re-use and recycling. Since this adds cost, at least at first, it needs to be driven by government action.

Action by national governments, the EU, the WTO and other international organisations is obviously essential. The North London Waste Authority (NLWA) should be pressing for this action.

We accept, of course, that this would take many years even if governments gave it priority. Since they currently don't, waste authorities such as the NLWA will have to deal with significant volumes of residual arisings for the foreseeable future.

Public education campaigns are needed to increase recycling.

Alternatives to incineration

There are a variety of ways of disposing of the 'residual arisings' other than incineration. (Landfill is obviously not one of them.) They include:

- Anaerobic digestion

- Pyrolysis
- The 'Norfolk solution' – ie making bricks and road surfacings.

Each of these avoids the emission of toxic chemicals from an incinerator. We urge that the proposed incinerator should not be approved until ALL the alternatives have been thoroughly considered.

Policy requirements

Given the need for an incinerator, it makes sense to use the heat in a CHP scheme. Such schemes are efficient ways of providing heat to buildings.

We believe that it's important that the incinerator should always be seen as a last resort. The NLWA should therefore avoid any arrangements that discourage reductions in the volumes to be burnt. Specifically:

- NLWA should avoid any heat supply commitments that require greater volumes to be burnt than the most optimistic plausible volumes.
- NLWA should commit to keeping the incinerator **under public control** for its whole life. A private owner would be bound to see it as a source of profit and thus seek to increase the throughput.

Summary

In short we ask that the Local authority:

1. Refuse planning permission until ALL the alternatives to incineration have been thoroughly considered.
2. If and when it does grant permission impose on NLWA the conditions in the last paragraph.

For comment

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