

## **Veolia's latest offering described as "misleading, incomplete and wholly unconvincing" by PAIN**

Responses to some of the questions about incinerator proposals that were put to waste company Veolia by Nottinghamshire County Council Planning Officers months ago have now been made available for public comment by 20<sup>th</sup> October. Local campaigners have criticised the document as misleading, incomplete and wholly unconvincing. People Against Incineration (PAIN) have also expressed alarm over our growing dependence on Veolia, raising the question of how the County would deal with threats from Veolia to walk away and leave local authorities with no waste infrastructure.

### **Veolia's latest offering**

Veolia's initial responses to some of the Regulation 19 questions they were asked regarding their planning application for a waste incinerator to be built in Sherwood Forest, on the border between Mansfield and Newark & Sherwood Councils, are available from Nottinghamshire County Council's website at <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/environment/planningmatters/developmentcontrol/planning-applications/applications-detail.htm?id=4114>

### **Misleading**

In a failed attempt to make their incinerator proposals appear less bad for the environment, Veolia have compared incineration to landfill. Their results are misleading because Veolia focussed only on biodegradable waste that should not be incinerated or landfilled, but should be composted instead. And the County Council has confirmed that figures used elsewhere in the application by Veolia do not match figures provided by the Council. For example, despite contracts obliging the County to send 60,000 tonnes a year to the Eastcroft incinerator, mostly from Broxtowe, Rushcliffe and Gedling, Veolia inexplicably use figure of 30,000 - 40,000 tonnes to Eastcroft in their Rufford application.

### **Incomplete**

Veolia has chosen not to answer some of the questions put to them by Council Planning Officers, including a request to compare the negative environmental impact of an incinerator with the positive environmental benefits of carrying out the plan to restore the site to heath land and woodland.

### **Unconvincing**

Veolia accept that, contrary to Government planning requirements and obligations under the Waste Incineration Directive and associated laws, consideration was not given to heat utilisation when selecting the proposed site.

PAIN believes that Veolia's reply proves that when choosing their preferred site they did not give adequate consideration to using as much heat as possible and as such is not now in a position to offer credible evidence that their site selection was legitimate, and that the site chosen is suitable. According to PAIN "Veolia have failed to answer

the questions and thus have failed to demonstrate that their proposed incinerator would handle waste in accordance with relevant policies, the waste hierarchy and the law”.

### **Alarming**

PAIN remains concerned about the secret terms contained within the Waste PFI contracts. A recent Audit Commission Report examining the UK’s waste industry, entitled *Well Disposed*, highlights the dangers of this type of contract to local authorities. The report calls attention to the financial risks of overestimating the amount of future waste, as PAIN say Nottinghamshire has done. According to the report: “If Waste Disposal Authorities [such as Nottinghamshire County Council] overestimate the amount of waste they will need to process, both the overall cost and the cost per tonne of waste processed are likely to be higher than they would have been had estimates proved accurate.” (p. 80).

Alarmingly, the Audit Commission found that local authorities who signed waste PFI contracts continued to bear risks they thought they had allocated to the waste company. Such risks include planning delays and technology failures – and waste companies, including Veolia, have ensured the Council bore the risk by threatening to walk away from the contract, leaving the County without waste disposal infrastructure (p. 87). According to PAIN: “It is a matter of serious concern that Nottinghamshire Country Council refuse to rule out the possibility that this could happen here”.