

Please find attached copy of the Minutes of the Planning & Development Committee held on Tuesday, 31 July 2007. I apologise for the delay in getting this to you, but we have been trying to make some sense of what has happened and decide what we should do next.

You may already know the outcome of that meeting, and will understand how disappointed and discouraged we all felt at the reaction of the majority of Councillors sitting on that Committee, and who held the future well-being of the residents of Halton in their hands. Having heard two members of the Committee and three other Councillors oppose the Application, suggesting that a Public Inquiry takes place and stating that they did not want to have an increase in bad health and mortality on their conscience, it came as a big shock to everyone, that the rest of the Committee chose to neglect their responsibilities and put this most important decision for Halton, and the fate of its residents, in the hands of remote Civil Servants in London who have no knowledge of the area.

We all felt let down that one of the main objections to holding a Public Inquiry was that one Councillor said it would cost the Council a million pounds. This was extremely hard to swallow; how much money can you put on the health of people in the community? This was also especially hard to comprehend, given that our Council has just passed the same amount of money to provide a third site for visiting travellers, at Manor Park, with seventeen hard standings for caravans, toilets and showers. Halton's ratepayers will not have the luxury of easily moving away, as these people will, if this Incinerator goes ahead!

Ineos appeared to openly blackmail Halton Council into a positive outcome for themselves. Their presentation was full of self-pity, and of their 'so called' critical financial situation. They did not mention the fact that they readily accepted a grant of over 40 million pounds in 2003 to help secure their business and to safeguard the future of jobs until 2010, or that this new venture would NOT guarantee any NEW jobs.

More importantly, both Ineos and Council Officers also failed to mention that within the North West region, there are currently plans being considered for three other incinerators of this type, each proposing to burn all the North West's waste – in other words, they are all bidding for the same free fuel – first come – first served! As we are talking about the waste of half the North West and not just the very small proportion of Halton's waste, surely, the most sensible way to deal with this would be to consider all these applications on their merits and come to an 'overall' conclusion on which method of waste disposal in the North West would have the least impact on the health and well-being of the population, and to stop this 'race' for the first one to get permission. It does not make sense to make a decision of this magnitude without looking at ALL the options.

Both the Council and Ineos said that a Public Inquiry would not produce any more evidence than has already been put forward either for or against the Proposal, and that there has been a full and thorough debate on the subject, but this is not true. Firstly, the Action Group was unaware of the new Report, which was brought to the meeting, into the proposed stack height and therefore had been unable to make comments on it. Secondly, many of the questions raised have still not been satisfactorily answered and thirdly, a Public Inquiry would have given both the Council and the Action Group further time to ensure that all the masses of evidence have been fully explored to the satisfaction of everyone.

The conclusion of the meeting took place so quickly that everyone commented that they could not take in or understand what was happening or what had been decided. A previously written out amendment to the Council Officers recommendation, which one Councillor brought to the meeting, was read out to the Committee and a further motion was moved incorporating additional conditions and was seconded. There was no show of hands on the original recommendation we only saw one

show of hands, which we understood to be with regard to the additional conditions. Everyone, even the Councillors and ex Councillors who were present and who were not sitting on the Committee, were surprised when the meeting came to such a very abrupt and unsatisfactory end. The feeling by many people, that the final decision had been a foregone conclusion and that our time that night and in preparation, had been wasted as the decision had already previously been made, made it difficult not to feel very tired and angry that our efforts had been in vain.

Since the meeting, some of the Press and TV coverage has been misleading. It is certainly **not true** that the Incinerator will go ahead without a Public Inquiry. The Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) (formerly the Department of Trade and Industry DTI) are to make the final decision.

**We will continue to try to stop this Incinerator from being built**, blighting our towns and the lives of its residents. We believe that all we have said to date is still relevant and we genuinely believe that our health and well-being and that of our future generations will be in great danger if this Incinerator goes ahead. We must now direct our energies toward persuading the BERR to hold a Public Inquiry. We are currently identifying the actions we must now take to ensure that this happens and will be sending out another Newsletter as soon as possible with more details.

The support of the people of Halton, against the Ineos Application, is evident and the Action Group would sincerely like to thank all who have helped in the campaign so far. Special thanks to those who came along to the meeting to support the Action Group and also thanks to the lady whose anonymous donation was received last week. This has certainly given the Action Group encouragement and further motivation to keep up the fight. Thank you for your support.