



News Release

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Northwich Waste Incinerator – The Environment Agency Gets It Wrong

The following is the response by CHAIN to the announcement by the Environment Agency that it is 'minded to' grant an environmental permit to TATA/E-ON to operate a large waste incinerator in Lostock, a residential area close to Northwich town centre.

' This is extremely worrying news for the people of Northwich and for the future of the town just as long awaited redevelopment plans take shape. We are not convinced that the EA has taken all of the relevant factors into account; for example they have ignored the inevitable traffic and diesel fume pollution issues in the neighbourhood of the proposed site and key recommendations made by the local NHS Primary Care Trust.

CHAIN also takes issue with the misleading statement by the Agency that the plant will not cause any harm to human health. This is irresponsible nonsense and is even out of step with the Government's own expert body, the Health Protection Agency, which admits to 'very small' and 'exceedingly low' risk of harm to people living close to waste incinerators. We also feel that the announcement is premature given that the Health Protection Agency itself has a study ongoing in Imperial College and King's College London into the health effects, including still births, infant deaths and babies born with congenital anomalies, on people who live within 15 kilometres of waste incinerators. That definition would cover the whole of Northwich and nearby Middlewich and Knutsford but the EA has decided not to take the precaution of waiting for the outcome of the research. The Agency has clearly disregarded the critical fact that there is no precedent anywhere in the world for an incinerator of the size proposed being situated in a densely populated area particularly so near to a large number of schools and has given priority to the incinerator development over the health hazards to local people. CHAIN hopes to convince the EA that it is not too late to change its mind even at this late stage.

Finally, considering the high level of support for CHAIN across Cheshire, we do not understand why we have not received any response from the EA to a series of straight questions we put to them in January this year. Could it be that the Agency is dodging difficult issues or is it frightened of the likely reaction by the people of Northwich to the answers? '