

# THE CHRONICLE

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SANDBACH & MIDDLEWICH EDITION

70p

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# TOXIC

## Incinerator will poison families, claim campaigners

By Simon Halewood

SANDBACH will be at risk from toxic emissions produced by a planned £200m incinerator at Middlewich, campaigners warn.

The Cheshire Anti-Incinerator Network (Chain) says the fallout from the scheme proposed for the Midpoint 18 Business Park, could pose a health risk to thousands of families downwind.

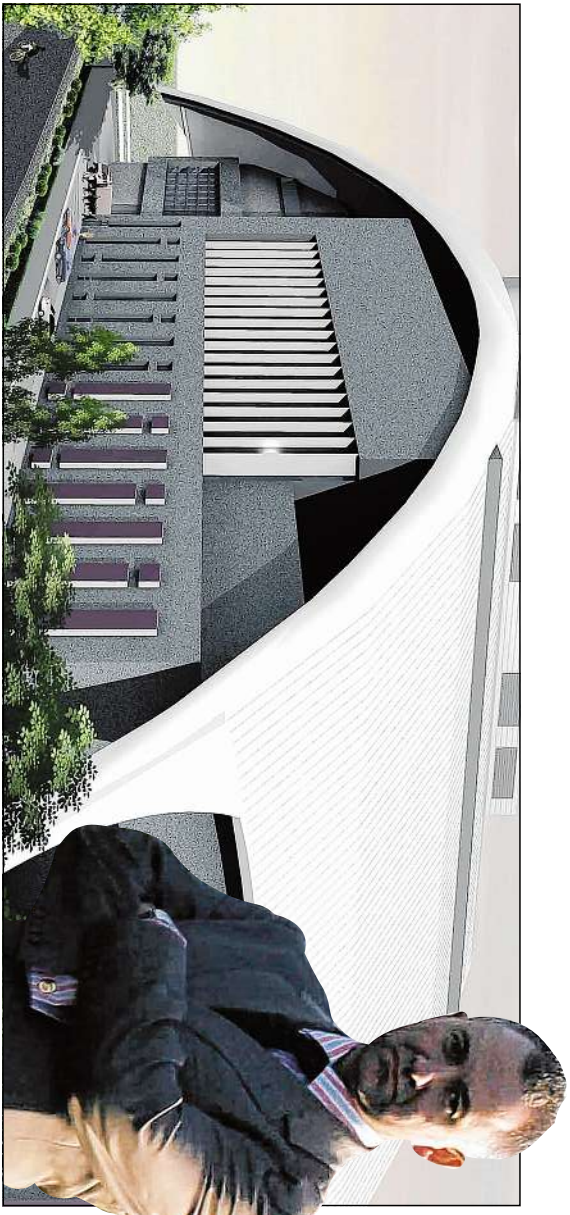
But, American energy bosses behind plans for the 32 megawatt plant, capable of burning up to 390,000 tonnes of waste a year, say emissions will be cleaned and constantly monitored.

Sandbach town councillor Martin Sherman said: "I think it is a precarious situation which we cannot ignore. It is not just Middlewich's problem.

"We live in a predominately farming area so any toxic fallout from the incinerator could be damaging for generations to come."

Energy-from-waste giant Covanta was forced to downsize its plans after Cheshire County Council decided not to shortlist the scheme for a private finance contract.

The company maintains that the plant would still power 20,000 local homes. Chain secretary Jonathan Guy said: "A British Society for Ecological Medicine report in 2006 concluded that "incinerator emissions are a major source of fine particulates, of toxic metals and of



**BURNING ISSUE:** Anti-incinerator campaigner Jonathan Guy, inset, fears Sandbach will be polluted by the proposed incinerator at Middlewich.

more than 200 organic chemicals, including known carcinogens, mutagens and hormone disruptors".

"These outputs can bioaccumulate, enter the food chain and cause chronic illness over time and a much wider geographical area.

"No-one knows for sure what levels of exposure to dioxins are safe for humans, except that in excess they can be lethal. "I would like to know from Covanta if

the plant is so safe then why is the chimney so high? And why do they need to pump emissions into the atmosphere?"

"Cllr Sherman is right to raise his concerns and it is very pleasing to see the areas downwind of Middlewich have finally realised they will be affected."

Covanta bosses have hit back at the claims and insist incineration is safe. Managing director Malcolm Chilton said: "Incineration liberates energy

from the waste. Some emissions always get out when you burn anything but these are extremely low risk as we operate well within EU emission limits.

"Emission limits set by the Waste Incineration Directive are much stricter than for coal-fired power stations.

"The Environment Agency regularly checks that each facility has cleaning systems in good working order and that records are kept of all emissions."

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