Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Appeal by Veolia ES Shropshire Limited

Site at Battlefield Enterprise Park, Vanguard Way, Shrewsbury, SY1 3TG

Ref: APP/L3245/A/11/2146219/NWF

Proof of evidence by Michael Ryan BSc C Eng MICE

Introduction

Planning Inspectors at past Inquiries have assumed that the Health Protection Agency (HPA), who are paid to protect public health and to advise Primary Care Trusts, the Environment Agency and others, have examined relevant data around existing incinerators to ensure that no harm to health has been taking place.

The above assumption by the Planning Inspectorate was misplaced and the documents already submitted by myself have shown that the HPA have not checked any relevant data despite their very public promise to do so, as reported in the press on 6 August 2003.

When Dr Dick van Steenis was expert witness at the Shropshire Waste Plan Public Inquiry in January 2004, there was a possibility that an incinerator would be built at Harlescott.

Dr van Steenis explained in detail the advantages of "plasma gasification", which was then, and remains the safest and cheapest method of waste disposal. He will also detail the laws that are applicable.

Veolia, who are appealing refusal of planning permission for an incinerator at Harlescott, were awarded a contract by Dow Corning in 2007 for a plasma gasification plant at Midland, Michigan – a fact that was reported in the Shrewsbury Chronicle, article "Town

'missing out on safer waste site'" (27 October 2007), where Veolia's Martin Curtois is quoted as follows:
"Our understanding is that plasma melt technology is designed for industrial and hazardous waste and is not suitable and is unproven for municipal solid waste."

On 11 August 2011, The Chemical Engineer reported planning permission being granted for a 300,000 tonnes per annum plasma gasification plant in Billingham, Teesside and the prospect of four additional plants across the country. The article's full text is pasted here. Shropshire could have been at the forefront of this technology in the UK:

News - full story

Plant will power 50,000 homes, and in the future could fuel hydrogen cars

11/08/2011

Teesside greenlights plasma gasi plant

Landfill diverted, hydrogen economy boosted

Adam Duckett

BOOKMARK

AIR PRODUCTS has won planning permission to build an advanced 49 MW gasification plant in Teesside, northeast England, which will convert non-recyclable waste into power.

The plant is to be built at the New Energy and Technology Business

Park adjacent to the North Tees Chemical Complex in Billingham, and would be the first of its type in the UK. Air Products wants to build five of the plants across the country in the coming years at a total cost of around £1b (US$1.62b). Each plant would consume around 300,000 t/y of household and commercial waste that would have otherwise gone to landfill, producing baseload power for an estimated 50,000 homes. Two existing commercial facilities have been operating in Japan for seven years.

The plants will use AlterNRG's Westinghouse plasma gasification process, which operates at very high temperatures, exceeding 5,000 °C. In this environment, the waste is exposed to controlled volumes of steam and oxygen, producing a syngas mixture of carbon monoxide and hydrogen, which can then be burned to generate electricity.

In the longer-term, the hydrogen could instead be used to power fuel cells in advanced vehicles. Air Products said the technology is being considered for use in a demonstration project by Waste2Tricity, a UK-based energy company.

"Our renewable energy facility could also play a part in the further development of the hydrogen economy," said Ian Williamson, director of hydrogen and bioenergy at Air Products.

The process also produces a non-hazardous glassy slag that can be used to produce road aggregate and floor tiles.

Subject to consent from the Environment Agency, work on site could start next year, with commercial operations starting in 2014. Air Products expects that between 500 and 700 people will be employed during the construction of the plant, with 50 permanent jobs being created once it begins operation.

Energy minister Greg Barker welcomed the announcement: "Energy from waste leads to considerable reductions in waste going into landfill, and makes an important contribution to the UK's low-carbon energy supply. This new technology will be an exciting addition to the energy from waste sector and I look forward to seeing the announcement of more of these projects."

http://www.tcetoday.com/latest%20news/2011/august/teesside%20greenlights%20plasma%20gasi%20plant.aspx

Health effects of incinerator emissions

Dr Dick van Steenis will be able to explain the health effects of incinerator emissions, as he's expert witness at this Inquiry.

The Health Protection Agency allege that there are insignificant adverse health effects – but they've not bothered to check any relevant data around any incinerator despite promising to do so in August 2003.

The Planning Inspectorate have relied on the HPA's opinion that there are no adverse health effects and have therefore given "negligible weight" to concerns raised by objectors.

This Inquiry is almost certainly the first where the Inspector has been provided with documentary proof that the HPA haven't examined any relevant data around incinerators and I draw his attention to this quote attributed to Dino Adriano in the Dorking Advertiser:

"It is quite clear that despite the world-wide concern over the health effects of PM2.5 particles, those charged with protecting public health in the UK are failing in their duty.

The HPA demonstrates disdain, incompetence or worse.

Given the prospect of a large number of incinerators being built over the coming years this situation needs exposing now at local and national level."

("Incinerator fury as bosses admit to no health checks: Protestors say agency is failing to protect public from illness" , Dorking Advertiser, 22 May 2008)

The Health Protection Agency are not present at this Inquiry – despite my request that they attend. Neither will the Environment Agency or Shropshire County PCT be available for cross examination.

The following extract from the decision letter for an incinerator at Sinfin, Derby, wrongly assumes that PM10s are the particle size that affect health whereas it's PM2.5s that are small enough to get into the lungs. It also wrongly assumes that the Health Protection Agency , Environment Agency and Primary Care Trusts have been diligent on the incinerator health issue as they haven't done "any epidemiological and other health studies" either – so the Inspector was very wrong to have relied in them.

44. In accordance with the advice in paragraph 31 of Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management (PPS10), I have not done my own assessment of epidemiological and other health studies. Instead, decision-makers are advised to have regard to the advice of relevant health authorities and

agencies. With that in mind, I have carefully considered the views of the City Council's Environmental Health Officer, the Health Protection Agency, the Primary Care Trust and the Environment Agency. None of them has recommended that planning permission be refused. Furthermore, so far as I am aware, a direct link between poor health and PM10 emissions in the vicinity of any UK or European WTF has never been proven beyond doubt.
45. I have therefore reached the view that the harm to health from the emissions from the stack is something to which I can attach only negligible weight.

Appeal Decision APP/C1055/A/10/2124772

http://www.pcs.planningportal.gov.uk/pcsportal/fscdav/READONLY?OBJ=COO.2036.300.12.2538744&NAME=/Decision%20letter.pdf

The HPA could have checked infant mortality rates in electoral wards around UK incinerators after the 2004 study was published where high infant death rates were found around 63 incinerators in Japan (J Epidemiol. 2004 May;14(3):83-93.).
The HPA could have checked infant mortality rates in April to August 2007 after London newspapers reported my research into infant mortality rates in electoral wards around incinerators.

The HPA have recently appointed Professor Paul Elliot, of Imperial College, London to investigate "birth outcomes" around incinerators. On 5 August 2007, I e-mailed Professor Elliot about my research and in September 2007, a study of infant deaths around incinerators in Italy was published which included a link to this map, which was prepared when I was unaware of the Reichhold incinerator (Cricket Green ward, Merton) in the H7 group of wards with high infant death rates:
http://www.ukhr.eu/mapa4.pdf

Conclusion

Waste disposal is an issue that's been ignored by many and yet those whose jobs involve disposal of waste have ignored a newer and safer technology, despite being alerted to it by in January 2004.

Professor Rod Thomson, of Shropshire County PCT, surely assumed that the HPA had checked data around incinerators before he accepted their advice that incinerators posed no significant harm to human health.

I recommend that my letters to Professor Thomson (20 August 2010), Kim Ryley (25 August 2010), Planning Inspectorate (2 April 2011), Environment Agency (18 March 2009) and enclosures are read and that this statement from the Council's website is ignored:

Would the EfW facility be safe?

Yes. EfW is a tried and tested technology, subject to stringent legislation - including the same pollution limits as other European countries must meet the European Union's Waste Incineration Directive criteria. The technology is advanced and widely accepted across the UK, continental Europe, the USA and Japan.

The Health Protection Agency, Environment Agency and Defra have concluded and endorsed the fact that energy from waste operated in compliance with relevant European legislation is safe for human health and the environment….continues

http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/waste.nsf/open/79684DCA4389E1A28025732A002B3C21