

Environment Select Committee 13<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Public Participation:

With the formation of the Waste Contracts Task Group and the awaited publication of the draft Waste Strategy there are still opportunities to make strong decisions on Wiltshire's path toward a sustainable future. A 'deep dive' is indeed needed to understand the environmental and social consequences of a strategy that seeks to change behaviour and recover value from waste.

Many of us have already dived in and now know the term, Waste Hierarchy. Many people involved in the campaign against the proposed incinerator in Westbury, know it too. They are asking questions, looking at the science, at planning, at what it means to win a contract from Wiltshire Council.

Which councillors here know and understand the technology planned? Their knowledge of incineration will lead to the best decisions. Councillors should rightly question not only the finer points of labelling bins which are significant but also the costs of entering into contracts requiring oversight and scrutiny.

For example, to dig into the proposed contract with Hills - do councillors know the effect the treatment of bottom ash from the incinerator will have on gate fees? I trust committee members to be informed on costings. And to know that ash may become subject to the same controls as for natural and secondary aggregates ie., heavy metal removal from incinerator stock. Wiltshire Council does not currently publish the gate fees so I cannot form my own opinion.

As council tax payers we want to be as involved as our councillors so that partnerships can thrive. The partnership I have with Hills Waste Recovery is an unequal one – I do not charge for sorting out my recycling, my goods, or for carrying them to the kerbside. I pay Hills to take my recycling and then to process it for the company's profit. What direct return do I receive in this transaction or 'contract'? The income I receive is not tangible to me as a council tax payer. My labour, my time has not been costed. I would work even harder if I knew this exchange meant income generation for the council and services for other Wiltshire residents.

We urge councillors and officers to further engage with the public and delve into terms like the circular economy, income generation, regional waste disposal, joint procurement and finally, to fully apply the Waste Hierarchy.

Marie Hillcoat