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Waste

An issue that concerns every one of us is waste. One of the most annoying forms of waste is the waste of money, our money, by those we charge to spend it wisely on what we collectively want or need.

Last July Herts County Council signed a contract with Veolia for a large incinerator to burn all the household waste left after recycling, etc. The heat produced will generate electricity, enough, they say, to power 50,000 homes. All very good, you may say.

Except it isn't. This scheme, supposedly a solution to getting rid of our waste in the most cost effective way, actually turns out to be very expensive (like so many other PFI schemes). Rather than 'saving' us well over £500 million over the next 25 years, as claimed, it is actually more expensive. It will be more expensive even than landfill would be and considerably more expensive than alternative solutions – at least £500million more. The cheapest method by far is recycling and only a small percentage of our waste is difficult or nigh on impossible to recycle.

There are obviously other factors involved such as reducing landfill, generating 'green' electricity, following government policies, etc, but all these are contentious and, anyway, pale beside those headline figures – we'll be paying highly until 2039/40 for this.

It is not too late. Two things that we can do – pester our MP, County Councillors and local councillors for more information or, better still, to challenge this decision.

And if really concerned write an objection to the planning application that is under consultation until January 31st. Expense/value for money is not directly a planning issue although it wouldn't hurt for HCC to hear about that, but there are numerous planning issues involved - invasion of green belt, increased traffic on our roads, pollution, size (at 380,000 tonnes it is over twice as large as we need so we will pay for facilities the company will then use to burn commercial waste). Note: just because it is planned for Hatfield doesn't mean we cannot or should not object – we are all affected!

To learn more: HCC's website at hertsdirect.org has details, opposition websites include hatfield-anti-incineration.co.uk, hertswow.webs.com or just Google 'New Barnfield Incinerator' for others.

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