

To: Councillor Robert Gordon, Leader of Hertfordshire County Council  
Copied f.y.i to: John Wood, Chief Executive and Director of Environment at Hertfordshire County Council  
Also f.y.i. to: Councillor Terry Hone as the elected member for Letchworth South Division,  
Elaine Shell, Democratic Services Manager and Kathryn Pettitt, Chief Legal Officer  
[Copied to Councillor Richard Thake as Executive Member for Community Safety & Waste Management]  
From: Dr John Webb, 1 Meadow Way, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 3JB

Dear Councillor Gordon,

**Re: Key decision on whether to go ahead in principle on Veolia's Revised Project Plan or to reject it and end the existing contract.**

*(Note: This is an interim message, pending advice on protocol from Councillor Terry Hone as my local county councillor or from an officer.)*

We commend the Council on its initiatives in re-use, recycling and composting, especially as this happens to be this year's Waste Week.  
[facebook](#)

This email arises from the risk, in the view of Herts. WithOut Waste and our advisers, of the Council arriving - albeit by due process - at an indefensible outcome on a key decision on the future direction of Waste Management. There are several grounds for our concern. The one I wish to cite here is the inappropriate haste with which this decision is being made in the first half of this month. We are urgently asking the Council to give due time to this in view of the proposal's uniquely large scale (ca. £1.1 billion indicative, lifetime cost to the Council), its contentious nature in terms of policies and precedents, and the duration of its consequences (until 2070 or so, whether the Council stays involved through to the stage of decommissioning the plant or not).

As you know, the matter is being decided in a series of meetings this month according to the Council's normal schedule for its meetings, while applying legal advice to each stage to ensure that the process complies with the legal requirements. Our concern here is in terms of democratic access and due consideration: that the two weeks allowed is not nearly sufficient time for the several stages of decision making on a matter of this importance to the Council, the public, relevant agencies, neighbouring authorities, businesses and national/international precedent setting.

Any key decision might have a similar or greater elapsed time invested in it. This decision, we contend, is uniquely important. *(Please note that we understand that the present decision is only on whether to accept in*

*principle or to reject a particular course of action. The former choice would lead toward the stages required to gain planning permission and then through the stages for implementing the proposal, if indeed all parties to the contract continued to take part.)*

The Council rightly points to the months of evaluation carried out by the Waste Management officers since 7 July 2015 when Veolia submitted the draft RPP. However the detailed information was withheld from the public domain, and not sent the councillors, until February 2016, and then only in summary form via the Officer's Report to the Cabinet Panel's meeting on 4th March and Cabinet meeting on 14th March, with an open Part 1 and a closed Part2.

The Revised Project Plan is necessarily framed to reflect the priorities negotiated between Veolia ES and the Waste Management officer for the Council's Waste Disposal Authority function. Especially since the decision making process has been shoe-horned, so to speak, into the routine schedule of meetings in this month before the previous contract expires, in our view that is far too narrow a basis of decision on behalf of the residents of Hertfordshire now and for generations to come. We could only accept that an outcome from that process would be sound if due time had been allocated between publication of the Officer's Report and each of the meetings. On a matter of this magnitude, we would hope that alternate scheduled meetings, with deferrals if called for, would be used to afford the elected members and the public a proportionate opportunity to explore the wider implications of the RPP, rather than just those for the WDA.

Kind regards,

John Webb  
07960 825668  
for HertsWOW