



## EXECUTIVE MEMBER

**DAVID MUNRO**  
County Councillor  
-Farnham South-  
Grange Cottage  
Frensham Road  
Frensham  
Farnham, GU10 3DS  
P: 01252 792485  
F: 01252 790683  
Email: d.munro@surreycc.gov.uk

Mr Colin Matthews  
Chairman  
Guildford Anti-Incinerator Network  
C/o The Vicarage  
5 Orchard Road  
Guildford  
GU4 7JH

10 October 2006

Dear Mr Matthews

### **Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy.**

I am responding to your open letter of 25 September to county, borough and district members about the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Surrey. I cannot speak for the other authorities in Surrey but as the portfolio holder responsible for waste management for the county council I feel I must correct some of the inaccuracies in your letter.

As you rightly say, the provision of energy from waste plants is only a part of the overall strategy, which places great stress on recycling and waste minimisation generally. There is, however, a residual amount of waste which cannot be dealt with in this way. We are determined to avoid it going to landfill, and we have no doubt that disposing of it through energy from waste plants is the best way.

You refer to Mechanical Biological Treatment and Anaerobic Digestion as alternatives. We have looked at these, and there may well be a place for them in the future, but they do not look cost-effective at present, cannot deal with all forms of residual waste and we will still need to find ways of final disposal of waste. I certainly do not accept that the provision of energy from waste plants in some way discourages recycling or the use of other technologies. We only intend to provide the capacity necessary for dealing with the residual waste. Energy from waste plants are expensive and no operator will invest in them except where there is no alternative.



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TELEPHONE: 020 8541 9733 or 7177 FACSIMILE: 020 8541 9529

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I personally am convinced that energy from waste plants are safe. Modern technology ensures that the emissions from these plants is controlled and are infinitesimal, particularly when compared to other air quality problems in Surrey. The amount of fly ash produced from such plants is also typically only one or two lorry loads a year, and will go to specially prepared hazardous waste sites outside Surrey. In fact, the main reason the material is classed as hazardous is because it is very alkaline as a result of the cleaning process it goes through and could be treated.

Finally, it simply is not true that the residents of Surrey have rejected energy from waste. The figures you quote reflect high levels of double-counting, as the same people comment again and again on different occasions, and many are clearly concerned about particular sites rather than the principle of energy from waste plants, which I understand completely. When we have asked the people of Surrey through, for example, the consultation on the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy, a majority have supported the move away from reliance on landfill and around half are prepared to accept energy from waste plants.

Yours sincerely

David Munro

David Munro  
Executive Member for the Environment

Copy:  
All county, district and borough councillors in Surrey



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