



## No Incinerator 4 Horsham Community Group (Ni4H)

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Re: Environmental Permitting of Waste Incineration Facilities in England (Case Ref: JQ51421)

11 April 2024

Dear Jeremy,

Thank you for your 9<sup>th</sup> April email, No Incinerator 4 Horsham Community Group (Ni4H) is delighted that the Rt. Hon. Sir Mark Spencer MP has issued a Direction to the Environment Agency under regulation 62 of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016, requiring a short-term pause in the determination of applications for environmental permits for certain types of waste incineration facilities in England.

See correspondence here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-permits-and-waste-incineration-facilities-ministerial-direction>

Please pass on Ni4H's thanks to the Minister. Ni4H understands that, in theory, the Environment Secretary also has the power to direct the Environment Agency to revoke previously granted Environmental Permits, such as the one granted to the Horsham incinerator (EPR/CB3308TD/V002). For this to happen, there would need to be a reason, for example, over provision of incineration capacity, harm to recycling rates.

Shlomo Downen, National Coordinator of the UK Without Incineration Network (UKWIN), has praised Defra's recent announcement:

"We are witnessing the start of what we hope will be a comprehensive moratorium on new waste incineration capacity in England. This follows similar moves in Wales and Scotland."

"For years UKWIN has been gathering evidence about how the over-provision of incineration has been holding back recycling in England. Wales banned new incineration capacity three years ago and is now achieving 66 per cent recycling. Scotland's recycling rate rose to more than 62 per cent since introducing their moratorium."

"We hope this move, together with other measures, will support England to improve upon last year's 43 per cent recycling rate."

According to their Incineration Overcapacity Briefing (2023), UKWIN expects England's incineration capacity to exceed available feedstock by 2.6 million tonnes in 2027 and by 7.4 million tonnes in 2042, even if no additional incinerators are built.

The BBC reported that:

"The work will consider whether the capacity being developed fits with government objectives to reduce the amount of waste incinerated and will look at concerns about "over-provision". It could lead to a further formal review."

"A spokesperson for Defra said the department was committed to reducing waste, improving recycling and meeting net zero targets for sending less waste for incineration. 'We must make sure we have the right waste management infrastructure to meet these goals, and are rightly considering the need for more waste incineration facilities.' "

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-68754274>

**The Climate Change Committee** [has warned](#) that "If EfW [incineration] usage is left to grow unchecked" this could result in "undermining recycling and re-use efforts" and [has recommended](#) that:

- The Government should: “Publish an assessment of residual waste treatment capacity needs through to 2050, consistent with meeting committed and prospective recycling and waste reduction targets”; and that
- There needs to be: “a moratorium on additional EfW capacity until a review of capacity requirements has been completed and an updated assessment of residual waste treatment capacity requirements published”.

### 65%+ recycling target

The current [Resources and Waste Strategy for England](#) was published in December 2018 and establishes a target of reaching 65% recycling target for municipal waste (which includes both household and business waste) by 2035.

Measures such as expanding the range of material collected at the kerbside, reducing single-use packaging, rolling out food waste collections, and better waste education can help [improve recycling rates](#) across the South East.

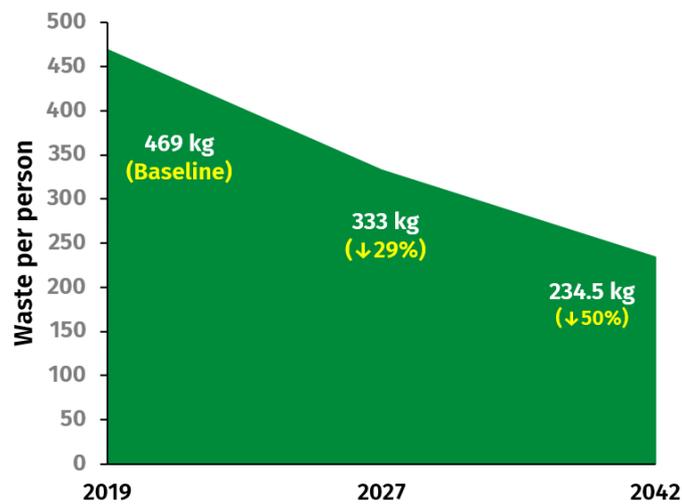
Wales [achieved 66% recycling in 2022/23](#), with several local authorities achieving 70%+ recycling rates.

### Residual waste reduction targets

The [Environmental Targets \(Residual Waste\) \(England\) Regulations 2023](#) put into law a statutory target for England to halve residual waste sent to incineration or landfill by 2042 compared to a 2019 base year.

The [Environmental Improvement Plan 2023](#) provides a set of interim targets for 2027, including a target to reduce municipal residual waste produced per person by 29% compared to a 2019 base year.

### Residual household and business municipal waste arisings based on England's waste reduction targets



### How opposing new incineration capacity supports recycling and waste reduction

Incinerators are [harming recycling](#) by burning recyclable and compostable material.

Many councils [told the Government](#) that their low recycling rates are due to incineration contracts undermining their ability to invest in recycling service improvements.

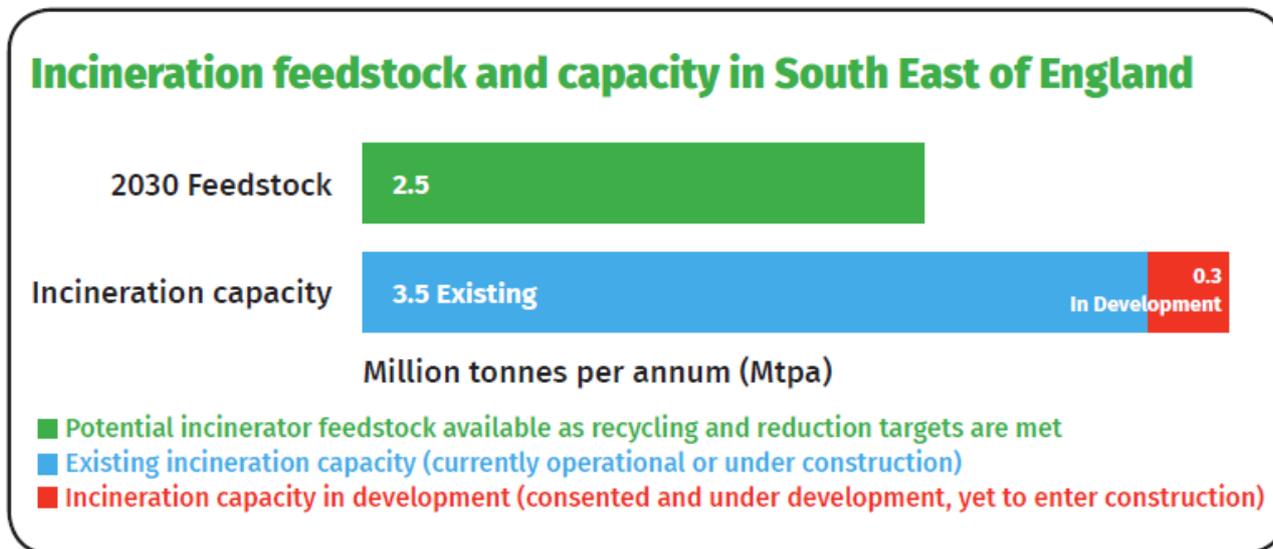
According to [UK Government data](#), there is a link between high rates of incineration and low rates of recycling.

[Studies indicate](#) that most of what is currently in the 'residual' waste stream is readily recyclable, meaning a significant proportion of what is currently incinerated or landfilled could have been recycled or composted.

A [Defra report published in August 2020](#) stated that: "Of total residual waste from household sources in England in 2017, an estimated 53% could be categorised as readily recyclable, 27% as potentially recyclable, 12% as potentially substitutable and 8% as difficult to either recycle or substitute".

To support recycling and the circular economy, both [Wales](#) and [Scotland](#) have banned new incineration capacity.

### Incineration in the South East



*Feedstock is based on waste reduction targets as set out in [UKWIN's Incineration Overcapacity Briefing](#).*

Across England there is already more [incineration capacity](#) than genuinely residual waste to burn. The South East has a significant amount of incineration capacity that is operational or under construction, yet there is even more in the pipeline. Limiting incinerator feedstock to genuinely residual waste would free up more than half the current capacity, undermining the rationale for building new incinerators.

**Existing incineration capacity in the South East** which is currently operational or under construction has a total Modelled Incineration Capacity, based on 90% of permitted capacity, of 3,476,691 tonnes, (of which 3,005,091 is operational). Of interest the 2,899,180 tonnes incinerated in 2023 emitted 2,816,563 tonnes CO2.

### Incineration capacity in development

Total active projects with planning and permitted consent, that have yet to enter construction is 342,000 tonnes, 90% permitted capacity, this includes Horsham 207,000 tonnes.

Incinerator	Operator / Applicant	Headline Capacity (tonnes)	Status
<a href="#">Horsham, West Sussex</a>	Britaniacrest Recycling	207,000	Consented
<a href="#">Reading, West Berkshire</a>	J Mould (Reading) Ltd	135,000	Consented
<b>TOTAL ACTIVE CONSENTED PROJECTS</b>		<b>342,000</b>	

Andrew Murrison MP and James Wild MP have already commented on the temporary pause.

**Andrew Murrison MP Facebook** post 8.4.24

"I have long been lobbying for a moratorium on new incinerators. Just like my constituents in Westbury, no one wants these unnecessary, polluting waste burners. I am encouraged that Minister Mark Spencer in Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has instructed the Environment Agency to temporarily pause the granting of new permits and hope that this is the first sign of a general reconsideration of incinerator policy. I am today in contact with ministers at Defra to make sure the case against incinerators is heard loud and clear."

**Andrew's Blog** 8.4.24 includes:

"I have written to Mark and the EA welcoming the move and also pressing the minister to go further. The powers he uses under the 2016 Environmental Permitting Regulations also allows him to revoke permits. Surely, given the clear evidence of our over-capacity and the risks of incinerators, it would make sense to revoke the permit given to Hills for their planned Westbury plant?" <https://www.andrewmurrison.co.uk/andrews-blog>

**MP Andrew Murrison wants Westbury incinerator permit revoked**

BBC News 11.4.24 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-wiltshire-68780666>

**James Wild MP Comments on direction to pause decisions on permits for incineration sites**

Commenting on the Direction issued by Defra to the Environment Agency to pause temporarily decisions on permits for new incineration facilities, James Wild MP for North West Norfolk said:

"The Direction from Defra to the Environment Agency ordering a pause on decisions on environmental permits for new waste incineration facilities is very welcome. When we have legally binding targets to halve the amount of residual waste going to landfill or incineration and existing incinerator capacity, the Wisbech project should not go ahead.

"Last month I met the Minister and expressed the strong opposition locally to this project. While planning permission was very disappointingly granted, without an environmental permit the project can't proceed. I will continue to make representations to the Defra team considering the role of further waste incineration."

<https://www.jameswild.org.uk/news/james-wild-mp-comments-direction-pause-decisions-permits-incineration-sites>

**Ni4H hopes** for early completion of the review, immediate lifting of the temporary ban and replacement with a more permanent moratorium.

The Minister should be exhorted to draw upon his powers to direct the Environment Agency to revoke previously granted Environment Permits, where construction has not started, including the Horsham incinerator.

Ni4H is very pleased to hear you will be writing to the Minister to ask that whatever has caused the pause should also impact facilities not yet constructed.

We know there is already an overcapacity in England of incineration, this will increase as feedstock declines and so if Horsham proceeds we could see this facility fighting to import feedstock, not just from West Sussex but from all parts of UK or beyond and for many decades to come!

We think that a press release from you along the lines of your letter to the Minister would be a very good thing to do now and we would be very supportive of you doing this. Your continuing support in these matters is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Catchpole,  
Chair, No Incinerator 4 Horsham Community Group (Ni4H)