

**Merton Council**  
**South London Waste Partnership**  
**Joint Committee**

**12 January 2023**

**Supplementary agenda**

11 Questions

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## **From Councillor Dave Tchil**

What level of relief does the SLWP take in finding out through its residents survey that not all residents appear to be fully aware of the presence of a polluting Incinerator in their neighbourhood, and in light of their unawareness, what do they recommend they do to spread the word to unsuspecting residents, that no monitoring of toxic emissions is undertaken around the homes, schools and gardens of these very same residents?

## **Reply**

The latest SLWP resident survey has revealed that 28% of residents across the SLWP region as a whole are aware of the Beddington ERF. This rises to 52% amongst residents who live in the six Wards closest to the site and 70% amongst those residents who live in Beddington Ward. So awareness levels amongst residents who live close to the facility are high.

What's interesting is that support for Energy Recovery Facilities as a method of dealing with non-recyclable waste is slightly higher amongst people who live closer to the Beddington facility than those who live further away: 76% of residents who live close to the Beddington facility say that energy recovery facilities are preferable to landfill (compared to 72% of the core sample) and the same proportion (76%) say energy recovery facilities are good way to dispose of non-recyclable waste (compared to 73% of the core sample).

The SLWP will continue to work with Viridor to raise awareness of the Beddington ERF across the SLWP region. The excellent, dedicated website [www.beddingtonerf.info](http://www.beddingtonerf.info) is a good place for people who have an interest to start. On this site it is possible to watch videos from inside the facility and to book a visit to tour the facility in person.

Emissions from the Beddington ERF are monitored every 10 seconds, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Samples are taken from the bottom of the flue stacks (chimneys) with the results uploaded on a regular basis to the Beddington ERF website and reported to the Environment Agency (EA). The EA is the regulator for the facility and is responsible for ensuring it is operating safely.

## **From Councillor Nick Matthey**

In this survey which I understand costs around £40,000 or around £40 per respondent, there appears to be no attempt to ask the person being questioned what they understand by the words Energy Recovery Facility or the abbreviation ERF. Energy Recovery Facility is not in use within the common parlance. In the trade press, an incinerator is called an Energy From Waste plant and by the majority of the

public, it is an incinerator. Therefore unless the interviewee understands what he or she is being interviewed about the whole exercise is pointless. Why has the South London Waste Partnership paid £40,000 to have a survey carried out where the issue of incineration is being deliberately concealed?

## **Reply**

The terms 'Energy Recovery Facility', 'Energy from Waste Facility' and 'Incinerator' are interchangeable. 'Incinerator' is typically used to describe the older generation of treatment plants that burn the waste but do not recover energy from the process. Modern residual waste treatment plants, like the one at Beddington, recover energy from the treatment process and tend to be referred to as either Energy Recovery Facilities or Energy from Waste Facilities. Energy Recovery Facility is the term that has been consistently used locally for over a decade to describe the treatment plant at Beddington.

Appended to the resident survey findings report is a copy of the resident survey in full. The wording for Q26 is as follows:

How much do you know about Energy Recovery Facilities (or 'Energy from Waste Facilities') where residual waste is burnt at very high temperatures in strictly controlled conditions to create energy?

- A great deal
- A fair amount
- A little
- Not very much at all
- Nothing at all
- Don't know (do not read out)

So the phrase 'Energy Recovery Facility' is accompanied by the phrase 'Energy from Waste Facility' along with a brief description of what these facilities do. Only after that does the survey move on to ask questions specifically about the Beddington ERF. There is no attempt to mislead or conceal anything. The survey was conducted by an independent research company following Market Research Society best practice.

Attitudes towards energy recovery facilities is just one of a number of important issues that the resident survey covers. Surveys are conducted with a representative sample of residents to ensure the findings are robust and reflect the views of the population as a whole. The contract to carry out this work was awarded to DJS Research following an open and fair procurement process.