



Mr M. Ryan
Sent by email

Our Ref PR
If you telephone Peter Richmond
please ask for
Your ref
Date 12 June 2014
E-mail address peter.richmond@halton.gov.uk

Dear Michael,

Freedom of Information Act 2000 - Request 1633 Internal Review

I write with reference to your Freedom of Information request reference 1633 and your subsequent email dated 20th May 2014 in which you requested an internal review.

Your question asked: *"What health and mortality data at electoral ward or any other level will be scrutinised by Halton Unitary Authority or their expert advisers to demonstrate beyond any reasonable doubt that emissions from Viridor's incinerator are not harming health?"*

After reviewing how the Council dealt with your request I am confident that the Council has followed due diligence in our consideration of your request.

The Council followed the corporate procedure relating to Freedom of Information requests and considered that it would be appropriate to consult Dr Alex Stewart from Public Health England as the lead expert on environmental hazards for Cheshire and Merseyside. Once his comments were received they were reviewed by the Council's Director of Public Health and it was concluded that they adequately addressed your inquiry.

It was Dr.Stewart's expert opinion that the evidence demonstrates:

"Well managed, modern incinerators are likely to have only a very small effect on health".
(HPA. The impact on health of emissions to air from municipal waste incinerators. 2010.

Dr. Stewart advised that despite the fact that public health statistics are reviewed and scrutinised at electoral ward level by a number of health agencies, including the Department of Health and Public Health England as well as the Council's Public Health Team there does not appear to be an easy way for Halton Borough Council or its expert advisers at Public Health England to demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt what is a negative. This means that it is very hard to prove that health and death rates, at whatever geographical level, are being affected by emissions from Viridor's incinerator.

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Resources

Municipal Buildings, Kingsway, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 7QF
Tel: 0303 333 4300

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This is because:

- (a) any health effects will be very small, and therefore will be difficult to count at the Halton level and
- (b) there are many other sources of emissions in and around Halton that affect the local air quality and could have an effect on health

This means that distinguishing any effects that might occur will be very difficult, if not impossible.

Should you remain dissatisfied you can appeal against the decision by contacting the Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Richmond
Divisional Manager
Service Improvement
ICT Services
Halton Borough Council