



PRESS RELEASE

Media contact: notoxicsmoke@gmail.com

More information: stop-edmonton-incinerator.org

LEGAL ACTION CHALLENGES GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR HARINGEY HEAT NETWORKS USING INCINERATED WASTE

- Eligibility of incinerator heat in Government's 'low-carbon' heat scheme questioned given option to use cleaner, more sustainable heat pumps
- Heat to come from new waste incinerator to be built in Edmonton, Enfield, by North London Waste Authority (NLWA)
- Incinerator heat 'not fit for purpose' as 4–5 times more carbon-intensive than burning gas and would lock north Londoners into having to produce large quantities of waste for decades
- North London residents to pay £150 million for dirty heat as councils disregard transition guidance
- Haringey and NLWA suspected of possibly using wrong data to misrepresent Edmonton incinerator as 'low-carbon'

London, 21 September 2022*—The Stop the Edmonton Incinerator Now (StEIN) coalition has instructed lawyers Leigh Day to send a letter to the Government's Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Department (BEIS) and Haringey Council as a precursor to a legal challenge regarding BEIS' decision to allocate funding to support two new district heating networks in Haringey, with the nearby planned new incinerator in Edmonton, Enfield, as the 'primary energy source'.

The group is challenging the UK Government and Haringey Council for earmarking £28 million for infrastructure that is to channel heat from the controversial Edmonton incinerator to the Tottenham Hale and Broadwater Farm Network and the Wood Green Network. The schemes are to heat more than 12,000 homes and about 270,000 m² of commercial space. The total capital expenditure noted in the award comes to £150 million for the infrastructure to use heat from the incinerator, rather than lower-carbon solutions.

The legal action comes as the UK and London are decarbonising heat and electricity systems to be able to bring critical net zero targets into reach. This transition prioritises the shift away from dirty power sources such as coal, oil, and gas, and towards low-carbon power sources, such as solar and wind, to ensure that heat from electricity is also low-carbon.

'At this stage there is no longer any argument about what kinds of heat networks we should be building', said long-time Haringey resident Sheila Risk, who is leading the legal challenge on behalf of the StEIN coalition.

'Official guidance is clear that we need to build heat pumps into our heat networks because they are a low-carbon alternative to burning gas. Plus, they cut local air pollution', added Risk. 'Incinerator heat isn't fit for purpose. It's even worse than gas. It simply isn't green and surely BEIS and Haringey Council are well aware of that.'

Research shows that heat from burning waste is about [four times more carbon-intensive](#) than heat from truly low-carbon sources of energy, such as wind and solar power. London Councils, for one, reports that waste incineration is one of most carbon-intensive forms of electricity generation, with emissions 'almost [five times higher](#) than the 181gCO₂/kWh emitted by the UK electricity mix in 2020'.

The planned heating schemes would be incompatible with guidance provided by the London Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI), which supports the capital's transition to net zero carbon. LETI build professionals have published a heat '[decision tree](#)' to guide decision-makers in choosing the lowest-carbon form of heat and the most affordable for residents.

Earlier this year, [energy experts](#) emphasised that heating networks should be designed 'from the outset with ultra-energy-efficient buildings with vanishingly small heat needs and with residual heat needs met by heat pumps or renewable heat sources'. [Recent research](#) similarly identifies a reduced-cost and lower-carbon alternative to the conventional community heating solution for London high-density housing.

That approach would spare taxpayers the enormous expense and complexity of a heat network. Carbon accounting experts have blasted incineration proponents—including the North London Waste Authority (NLWA), which is building the Edmonton plant—for [misleading the public](#) about the true carbon intensity of waste incineration.

Risk said: 'The lawyers are trying to figure out whether Haringey Council and the Government used incorrect emissions data spread by the NLWA. That may be part of the problem, but they should have known better since accurate data is readily available.'

'It makes no sense for us taxpayers to pay out hundreds of millions for heat infrastructure when developers could just be told to follow the cost-effective solutions advised by build professionals', added Risk.

As reported in a [DeSmog exclusive](#) and described on the dedicated [crowdfunding page](#) about this case, the StEIN campaign has hired the law firm Leigh Day to challenge both the Government's decision to award the funds and Haringey Council's decision to accept them. Leigh Day has requested official responses by 26 September 2022.

The legal challenge is based on three grounds:

- that the UK Government's decision to award the funds was unlawful in that incinerator heat cannot reasonably be expected to 'deliver carbon savings', a main aim of the Heat Networks Investment Project (HNIP) through which the funds were secured;
- that the UK Government and Haringey Council failed to take into account advice from the independent Climate Change Committee that increased and unabated emissions from waste incineration are not compatible with the UK's carbon budgets and net zero target, particularly in the context of the UK's commitment to decarbonise the electricity system by 2035; and
- that the UK Government and Haringey Council failed to consult the public prior to granting and accepting the funds, respectively—a shortcoming that is particularly relevant since consultations would undoubtedly have served as a tool for correcting their erroneous assumption that the incinerator qualified as a 'low-carbon' energy source.

As currently planned, both heating networks are to rely on back-up gas boilers for when the supply of incinerator heat becomes unreliable or unavailable. A back-up plan is required not only because incinerators occasionally shut down due to technical or other faults, but also because the amount of waste sent for incineration will plummet if recycling targets are met. That means there will not be enough waste to keep the Edmonton plant operating at capacity, which will affect the amount of heat the plant can supply to residents in the heat networks.

But Haringey's plans would lock residents into a scheme that is dependent on the incinerator, which would also make decommissioning the plant more difficult. Such was recently the case with the Eastcroft [incinerator in Nottingham](#), where closing down the heating system was 'not an option as the complexity of the infrastructure means its 5,000 customers cannot immediately receive energy from other providers'.

Given the Government's plans to [cut non-recyclable waste in half](#) by 2042, dwindling feedstocks may well force at least a partial decommissioning of the Edmonton incinerator early in its operational life. Lock-in would thus be likely to interfere with the decommissioning as well as with the UK's efforts to deliver carbon savings.

Carina Millstone, founder of the StEIN coalition, said: 'The government talks about improving energy security and combatting climate change but then turns around and decides to fund a scheme reliant on a toxic, carbon-intensive, exorbitantly priced incinerator that London doesn't even need. The North London Waste Authority needs to go back to the drawing board for its waste management, and Haringey for its heating plans.'

Unless council plans are revised, north London residents are likely to pay £150 million for heat infrastructure that relies on the burning of waste in Edmonton and back-up gas boilers. The StEIN campaign argues that the money should instead be invested in clean, low-carbon heat pumps and that the North London Waste Authority must immediately put on hold and review its plans for the oversized incinerator in Edmonton.

Risk stated: 'Haringey Council has obligations to its taxpayers and especially to the future recipients of the heat. And it has net zero commitments. I'm hoping this case will help to put the Council on track to meeting those obligations.'

'We don't have any insight into what Haringey Council discussed with the Government regarding these heating schemes. So it is vital for the democratic process that taxpayers can examine the decision-making process and see the figures and assumptions. The responses to our legal letter will hopefully clear all that up.'

Risk is accepting donations to help pay for the legal services for this case. Her crowdfunder is at: <https://www.crowdjustice.com/case/end-dirty-energy-from-waste/>.

— ### —

Notes for editors

On StEIN's legal challenge:

- DeSmog exclusive on StEIN's legal challenge: <https://www.desmog.com/2022/09/21/climate-lawyers-take-aim-at-green-heating-scheme-fed-by-incinerator/>
- StEIN crowdfunding page on CrowdJustice: <https://www.crowdjustice.com/case/end-dirty-energy-from-waste/>

On the HNIP funds for infrastructure to channel heat from the Edmonton incinerator to Haringey's district heating networks:

- Government announcement: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/54m-heat-network-funding-helps-households-ditch-fossil-fuels>
- North London Waste Authority announcement: <https://www.nlwa.gov.uk/news/heat-thousands-homes-haringey-be-piped-edmonton-ecopark>
- Government HNIP heat network projects as of Q1 2022 (see pages 33 and 34 for the Haringey district heat networks, also pasted below):
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1090792/2022-q1-january-to-march-heat-networks-project-pipeline.pdf

On the carbon intensity of waste incineration and related guidance:

- *The Telegraph*: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2021/02/04/energy-waste-plants-face-scrutiny-carbon-emissions/>
- Josephine Moulds and SourceMaterial: <https://www.source-material.org/blog/dirty-white-elephants>
- London Councils [Retrofit London Action Plan](#) (page 55)
- CCC guidance:
 - for the Government: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/2022-progress-report-to-parliament/>
 - for local authorities (p. 91): <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Local-Authorities-and-the-Sixth-Carbon-Budget.pdf>
- LETI guidance: https://b80d7a04-1c28-45e2-b904-e0715cface93.filesusr.com/ugd/252d09_3b0f2acf2bb24c019f5ed9173fc5d9f4.pdf (page 76)
- Heat system design pointers: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335927685_Heat_Autonomy_-_Life_after_District_Heating_on_route_to_zero_carbon
- Environmental Finance (paywalled): <https://www.environmental-finance.com/content/analysis/a-burning-issue.html>
- Expert assessment demonstrating that the North London Waste Authority's carbon data is inaccurate:
 - Blog: <https://www.dominichogg.com/hoggblog/should-incineration-attract-finance-from-green-bonds>
 - Report: <https://www.dominichogg.com/s/Eligibility-of-Incineration-for-Green-Bonds-Final-Version.pdf>
- Nottingham heat network lock-in consequences: <https://www.nottinghampost.com/news/nottingham-news/nottingham-taxpayers-foot-bill-council-5853057>

Pasted below are HNIP summaries of the heat networks in Haringey (pages 33 and 34):

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1090792/2022-q1-january-to-march-heat-networks-project-pipeline.pdf

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

Last Update: 2022

Tottenham Hale and Broadwater Farm District Heating Network

Project Sponsor:
London Borough of Haringey

Network Map:

Technical Information:

Primary energy source:
Industrial heat - EFW

Project description:
The Tottenham Hale and Broadwater Farm District Heating Network will supply 25 connections in Tottenham Hale and the Broadwater Farm Estate in Tottenham. The scheme consists in total of 7,495 dwellings and 125,548m² of commercial floor space. The Broadwater Farm Estate district heating scheme currently serves 937 existing homes across 11 blocks and two schools. One of the high rise blocks is to be demolished which will reduce the load to 835 homes and two schools but redevelopment of the estate will see the Council add another 350 new homes to the system over the next 5 years. The network will connect to and purchase heat from Energetik who are connecting to the new North London Heat and Power Energy Recovery Facility. The interconnector will run southwards of the facility towards the Tottenham Hale Energy Centre and will branch off en route westwards to supply the Broadwater Farm Estate. The Energy Centre in Tottenham Hale will be located in close proximity to the connected loads and will be equipped with thermal stores and top-up/back-up gas boilers. The Broadwater Farm (BWF) Estate will be supplied only with ERF heat, top-up and back-up will be provided by existing local gas boilers located within an existing local Energy Centre. The thermal substation in the BWF Estate will be accommodated within the existing energy centre.

Summary forecast financial information:

Total capex (£m)	£32.47
Project IRR*	3.34%

*Real pre-tax pre-finance

FID	Construct ion Start	Heat On (initial)	Heat On (full)
2022	2023	2024	Not Provided

Project Stage
Commercialisation&Construction

Project Contact Details:

Contact Name:	HNIP
Email:	BDM@tp-heatnetworks.org

HNIP Application Information:

Grant requested (£m)	£4.60
Corporate Loan req. (£m)	£12.65
Project Loan requested (£m)	£0.00

33 | HNIP@beis.gov.uk | 2022 Q1

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

Last Update: 2022

Wood Green District Heating Network

Project Sponsor:
London Borough of Haringey

Network Map:

Technical Information:

Primary energy source:
Industrial heat - EFW

Project description:
The Wood Green District Heating Network will supply 28 site Wood Green. The scheme consists in total of 5,054 dwellings and 144,533m² of commercial floor space. The network will connect to and purchase heat from the proposed Tottenham Hale District heating network (Phase 1) which is connecting to the Energetik network who are connecting to the new North London Heat and Power Energy Recovery Facility. The interconnector to Wood Green will connect to phase 1 near Broadwater Farm and will run westwards to the wood Green area and the Energy Centre located in the Clarendon Square development. The Energy Centre Wood Green will be located in the Clarendon Square development where the developer is providing a EC shell to LBH as part of the S106 agreement. It will be equipped with thermal stores and top-up/back-up gas boilers.

Summary forecast financial information:

Total capex (£m)	£33.89
Project IRR*	2.61%

*Real pre-tax pre-finance

FID	Construct ion Start	Heat On (initial)	Heat On (full)
2022	2023	2025	Not Provided

Project Stage
Commercialisation&Construction

Project Contact Details:

Contact Name:	HNIP
Email:	BDM@tp-heatnetworks.org

HNIP Application Information:

Grant requested (£m)	£8.03
Corporate Loan req. (£m)	£2.56
Project Loan requested (£m)	£0.00

34 | HNIP@beis.gov.uk | 2022 Q1

* This version of the press release has been slightly modified for clarity.