



## PRESS RELEASE

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### LEGAL CHALLENGE AGAINST GOVERNMENT AND HARINGEY COUNCIL REVEALS FLAWS IN EDMONTON INCINERATOR CLAIMS

- Campaigners gain evidence of disregarded CO2 volumes in Government calculations
- Haringey district heating plans neither ‘low-carbon’ nor ‘at fair cost’ to taxpayers
- Heating schemes a ‘costly mistake for Haringey, north London, and the climate’

**London, 7 November 2022**—With professional legal support, climate justice campaigners of the Stop the Edmonton Incinerator Now (StEIN) coalition have elicited evidence that the Government’s assessment of two district heating schemes in Haringey were based on erroneous assumptions about carbon emissions.

If built as proposed, the district heating schemes—one in Tottenham and one in Wood Green—would rely on heat and hot water from the planned Edmonton incinerator in Enfield. Via its Heat Networks Investment Project (HNIP), which aims to ‘[deliver carbon savings](#)’, the Government recently awarded Haringey Council £28 million in grants and loans for the construction of pipes and other infrastructure required to channel the heat from the incinerator to the heat networks.

Claimant Sheila Risk, a long-time Haringey resident, said: ‘Haringey taxpayers have a right to heating systems that have the lowest possible carbon emissions while representing value for money. But it now seems that secure, truly green options were dismissed in favour of an expensive, disruptive, unreliable scheme that will lock us into feeding a dirty, high-carbon incinerator mountains of waste for decades to come, when more than half of that waste should be recycled.’

The Government’s assessment of the heating proposal was based on flawed assumptions about carbon emissions, StEIN’s legal action reveals. In response to legal letters sent by law firm Leigh Day on behalf of the campaigners, neither BEIS nor Haringey Council was able to provide any evidence that the schemes would be genuinely ‘low-carbon’, particularly in comparison to modern heat alternatives such as air-source heat pumps, which would be powered by renewables.

Moreover, BEIS relied on calculations that are demonstrably flawed. First, BEIS incorrectly assumed that the CO2 emissions associated with heat from the incinerator would be offset by the decision not to use individual gas boilers. But the alternative to using incinerator heat is using low-carbon heat pumps, not high-carbon gas boilers. Second, BEIS calculations did not factor in the carbon implications of a reduction in the incinerator’s electricity supply to the grid (which would drop as the heat supply to Haringey rises) or of the variable demand for heat. Third, BEIS failed to account for the greenhouse gas emissions associated with the construction of the pipes from Edmonton to Haringey.

In its response to Leigh Day, Haringey Council also betrays a predisposition to promoting the use of waste heat despite the availability of more cost-effective, truly low-carbon alternatives. In particular, the Council notes that the heating networks would ‘simply make the most of the fact that the

Incinerator exists by facilitating the use of heat produced by the Incinerator’—a position that is incompatible with the aims of Haringey’s [Climate Change Action Plan](#) to get to net zero.

Neither BEIS nor Haringey Council appear to have taken into consideration the [latest building industry recommendations](#), which detail how to build new homes with the lowest need for heat and with solutions that can also provide cooling as the planet warms. Over the coming decades, as the National Grid decarbonises, electricity will become increasingly low-carbon, meaning that any ‘savings’ from using waste heat will vanish early in the Edmonton incinerator’s operational life.

The information gleaned from BEIS and Haringey Council’s responses to Leigh Day demonstrates that no effort has been made to maximise carbon savings—or to minimise costs to the taxpayer. Indeed, more than £66 million in capital costs could be saved if Haringey Council were to decide against constructing the heat pipes across the borough. Alternatively, that sum could be invested in schemes that would secure much higher carbon savings across Haringey.

As for the £28 million in HNIP funds, they comprise a £12.6 million grant that is to be paid by UK taxpayers and a £15.2 million loan that is to be part of the debt taken on by a proposed Haringey energy company—a risky commercial undertaking. The cost to Haringey taxpayers has not yet been made public.

The replies from BEIS and Haringey Council to StEIN’s legal team provide invaluable insight into how officials are calculating—and miscalculating—carbon emissions and why they are not doing more to achieve the goal of ‘delivering carbon savings’. Based on further legal advice, however, the campaigners understood that they would not be able to pursue the legal route any further to address concerns about the district heating schemes.

Stop the Edmonton Incinerator Now founder Carina Millstone said: ‘We feel vindicated in that we were able to expose the Government’s flawed carbon calculations, but we are beyond disappointed that our legal action has not persuaded the Government or Haringey Council to reverse their decisions. Not only are taxpayers paying for a climate-destroying incinerator that London does not need, but we are now also paying for a decentralised energy network that commoditises the very waste we are meant to be preventing. Along with the incinerator, this scheme will prove to be a costly mistake for Haringey, north London, and the climate.’

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**For editors:** Background information is available at <https://stop-edmonton-incinerator.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2022-09-22-Press-release-Heat-Scheme.pdf>.