

## Boiler damage sees Kirklees incinerator out of action 22nd.September 2006

The Kirklees incinerator has suffered a serious breakdown that will put it out of action for several weeks, it has emerged.

Both Kirklees council and SITA today denied claims that there had been an explosion at the 135,000 tonnes-per-annum capacity plant on the night of September 2-3.

Nevertheless, the waste firm said "significant damage" was caused by a mechanical failure in which the boiler walls overheated, buckling a number of the boiler wall tubes.

Two councillors visiting the site shortly after the incident have reported seeing extensive damage and one remarked that it looked like there had been an explosion at the plant.



*“ This is an unfortunate incident, costly to SITA UK but not to Kirklees taxpayers. ”*  
- John Scanlon, SITA UK

### Repairs

SITA said "extensive repairs" to the incinerator will cost £1 million, but putting the expense into context, the firm said during normal operations it "generally spends between £1m and £1.5m per annum maintaining the facility".

Explaining the causes of the incident, a statement from the company said: "The failure was primarily caused by a water leak in the boiler tubes. This caused the boiler walls to overheat which subsequently caused some significant damage when a number of the boiler wall tubes buckled. Boiler tube problems are not uncommon in EfW plants due to the high temperature environment in which they are working."

SITA said the costs arising from the incident would be met by the company, rather than Kirklees metropolitan council or Council Tax payers.

John Scanlon, operations director for integrated waste management at SITA UK, said: "This is an unfortunate incident, costly to SITA UK but not to Kirklees taxpayers and it will not effect the long-term operation of the facility."

**“ We have a significant amount of landfill allowances to sell, and will continue to have a significant amount to sell for a few years. ”**

- Steve Noble, Kirklees council **Kirklees**

Kirklees council told *letsrecycle.com* that the plant's annual four-week maintenance work will be brought forward to coincide with the forced down-time, minimising the impact from the break-down.

Steve Noble, environmental health director at the council, said the plant is expected to be up and running in early November. He said: "It is going to take us and our waste contractor, SITA, eight weeks to repair. The plant was due to close for four weeks anyway for its annual service. It is expected to be up and running by November 1."

The council said a technical report had been produced regarding the incident, but the report was "private", and not available for the public.

Despite the incinerator being out of action until November, Kirklees council said the problem would not affect its compliance with the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme.

Mr Noble said: "We have a significant amount of landfill allowances to sell, and will continue to have a significant amount to sell for a few years. Even with the plant breakdown we'll have a 70% diversion rate."

**“ The incident was so serious that the Huddersfield water system couldn't handle the needs of the fire services. ”**

- Cllr John Wood, Restormel council **Councillors**

Two councillors from Cornwall visited the Kirklees facility shortly after the incident, because SITA is proposing to build an energy-from-waste facility in their local area.

One of these councillors told *letsrecycle.com* today that engineers at the Kirklees site had revealed to him what had happened at the plant, not knowing he was a visiting councillor from Cornwall.

Cllr John Wood of Restormel council, who is leading a campaign against a SITA incinerator in his borough, said: "Inside the burner one of the pipes burst, but this was quite routine according to the engineer. But wasn't routine was that enough water gushed out to put out the fire in the furnace, and it had to be re-lit."

The councillor, who visited the site along with fellow Restormel councillor Frederick Greenslade, said: "The incident was so serious that the Huddersfield water system couldn't handle the needs of the fire services, which is why they pumped water from the local canal."

**“ Controlled ”**

Responding to the Cornish claims, which also featured in the Cornish local press, SITA said: "When the initial boiler tube leak occurred the facility was shut down in line with its environmental licence. The flue gas cleansing process continued to operate during the time of the problem and there was no liquid discharge.

"The remaining waste is being kept in a controlled environment during the period of repair," SITA said.