

Week One of the Incinerator Inquiry brought some dramatic revelations and concessions from waste company Veolia. Veolia experts conceded that their proposed location is in fact a green field site as PAIN has insisted all along, and not a brown field site as had previously been claimed by Veolia. This means their plans do not comply with important planning policies.

Evidence from Natural England called for an “Appropriate Assessment” of potential adverse effects on the integrity of the Sherwood Forest site, identified as a possible Special Protection Area for woodlark and nightjar. The list includes the recent UK Coal application also on the former Rufford Colliery, and developments in Forest Town, Clipstone, Ollerton, and Edwinstowe, including the new Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre.

Veolia experts admitted that there are other sites and other technologies that could be used if their Rufford plans fall through. Veolia described the former Summit Colliery in Kirkby-in-Ashfield and land off the Old Newark Road, Mansfield as “viable sites”.

Veolia’s Managing Director Steve Mitchell also conceded that as the waste contract specified the site, the capacity and the technology, Veolia’s “Community Liaison Group” could not influence these plans. He also agreed that there was no public consultation with Nottinghamshire residents until several years after the waste contract was signed.

According to Rainworth resident and PAIN Chairman Bernard Thompson, who attended the first week of the Inquiry, “Veolia have crumbled at the first sign of scrutiny. The Inspector is very fair and very knowledgeable, and very respectful to the community, who appear to have been right all along”.