

Message from Marton cum Grafton Parish Council:

We thank those Parish Councils who have responded to our recent letter and have either written to their County Councillors, or put the matter on their next agenda. You may be interested to know that up to 100 members of the public joined a demonstration outside the NYCC Council Officer in Northallerton before their Council Meeting on 21 July and filled the visitors' gallery during the meeting.

Many parishes in North Yorkshire knew nothing about the proposed incinerator for the county before receiving our letter - even though this is the largest ever contract for NYCC and the cost will impact on all council tax payers. If recycling were to be increased, it is estimated that the proposed incinerator will be twice as big as is needed - providing a profitable commercial facility for AmeyCespa funded by the ratepayers of North Yorkshire. AmeyCespa has confirmed that any shortfall in household waste will be made up by commercial waste.

The County Councillor for Pickering put forward a Motion for greater transparency by way of a Public Debate on the subject, to allow the people of North Yorkshire some input before the vote is taken at the next Council Meeting in October. Unfortunately the Motion was voted down by 41 votes to 16, with voting along party lines. Many who attended the meeting were angered by the way their views were dismissed by the Council.

All this comes at a time when NYCC faces unprecedented financial problems that highlight the dangers of committing vast sums of money to a very long-term contract - in this case the contract is set in stone for 25 years.

For example, we now know that NYCC funding is likely to be slashed by 25 per cent in October, meaning that the council will have to enforce £43m in financial savings by 2014/15. An additional one-off saving of £10.8 million is required in the current financial year after the Government announced it was reducing local authority funding nationally by £1.2 billion just after coming to power in May. Extra pressures are mounting after the Government announced plans for a national council tax freeze during at least the next financial year.

Public service cuts are already being discussed that include a 10% cut in the public transport budget, a cut in children's social care of £1.2 million, removal of subsidies to the council's outdoor education centres, as well as severe cuts of up to 35% for the National Park budget.

When we last contacted you we highlighted the financial risks of the current scheme to ALL ratepayers of NYCC. Wherever you live in North Yorkshire, you and your children will end up paying for this over-sized and unnecessary waste plant for decades to come through reduced investment in front-line services.

Please keep up the pressure on your local County Councillor to not just vote this plan through at the next NYCC meeting in October - but to at least consider reducing expenditure by improving recycling, reducing waste and building a much smaller plant on the site.