

STATEMENT FROM DAVID ANDREWS

There are two possible explanations in DISC's opinion as to how the MWDF process failed the Examination:-

1. The officers had a single plan all along and used the system to build reasons to support that plan to the exclusion of all other. We know from the community that offers to sign options on the Dalton site were made by an agent of the County but rebuffed by the owner. The Examiner made extensive reference to it. This appears largely driven by senior staff having limited experience of forensic examination of the way ahead and there being insufficient staff to carry out in depth identification and analysis of possible options. Weaker and fearful junior officers were swept along unable to resist a bullying environment which was fast deteriorating as more planning staff left. Consequently councillors were probably erroneously briefed and there was little testing of their understanding of the process and where the council stood.
2. The other option was that a systemic failure of process took place. This has many parts:-

Overview

There was no experience of the new planning process and the front loading was a new characteristic of the process of delivery under PPS10 .The challenge process was absent and did not address the robustness or otherwise of the scenarios under consideration –clearly a failure of senior management. This left a lack of clear definition and the waste planning process was not considered to be a change process in sufficient depth. There was a lack of appreciation that the waste management role needed to change from cost minimization to waste arising minimization. It was clear that the team presenting the Waste Core Strategy did not understand the way strategy works. The team had not been tested by management and their presentation was poor. These failures resulted in a lack of clear definition of objectives and limited the scope for an in depth examination of the waste planning process. There was little understanding of the process which had delivered them to the Examination and the how the building blocks had been assembled (however poorly).

Audits:-

There was no formal capacity and capability audit:-

- a. There was a lack of evidence base to make decisions from – ref Robert Murfin from YHA letter related to introduction of Mass Balance recording
- b. There were no meetings held with neighbouring authorities to review their experiences and capacities
- c. The separation of the Yorwaste collection operation from the Executive and Policy making role at NYCC left a lack of hands on experience of evolving operations and distancing of the executive from the 'shop floor'. It is not clear that the Districts and County Council were working as policy makers hand in hand with the PFI and the disposal authority within the Core Strategy review process. It appears they had their own simplified process which short to a solution and there aimed to steamroller the Core Strategy review.
- d. DISC understands that there was a declining capacity for planning large scale new operations with staffing falling from 14 to 3 over the period the planning department handled this strategy
- e. Materials science experience was non- existent
- f. It is not clear that the remaining staff understood the nature of the problem they were confronted with and so lacked capability
- g. The economics of the operation as it might evolve were poorly understood

There was no formal market analysis of costs and values of waste streams in the adjacent Let's Talk Less Rubbish waste management strategy.

and the opportunity to review the matter of how over £327,000 was lost in this process in 2007-8. There was no cost centre allocated to this project despite significant outgoings as early as 2005, and joint project work with City of York going back to 2001.

It is perhaps instructive for me to have read a comment by Max Hastings that in Thatcher's government a major failing of the ruling Conservatives was a woeful lack of concern for local government services and the standards they achieve. It seems that this conclusion can be reached all too easily by the residents of North Yorkshire

1. The need to lift the current blight on food processors future developments on the industrial estate (eg Wagg Foods);

3. the need for NYCC to educate the public about waste disposal methods (we are accustomed to landfill at present) and to assure the public that new waste disposal technologies will not be proposed unless their perceived dangers (eg toxic emissions) can be safely overcome;

4. the need for much improved public consultation regarding future proposals;

5. an assurance that the PFI contract is on hold until the new WCS is approved; and

6. the willingness of DISC to make constructive comments at any stage of the new WCS preparation.