

Councillor Barry Lewis

Leader of the Council

Councillor Christopher Woolmer

Lead Member for the Environment

London Borough of Sutton

Email: leadership.office@sutton.gov.uk



Philip Duffy

Chief Executive, Environment Agency

Letter sent by email to:

Chief.Executive@environment-agency.gov.uk

Date: 22 August 2025

Dear Mr Duffy,

We have now had the opportunity to read the Environment Agency's (EA) full report on the Beddington Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) in Sutton.

The report states that between September 2022 and March 2024, there were 916 (a combined figure from the site's two waste processing lines) occasions when the site exceeded the daily emissions limit value for the amount of Oxides of Nitrogen (NOx) going into the atmosphere.

The volume of emissions does not breach air quality standards. We also acknowledge that the UK Health Security Agency concludes that the emissions are unlikely to have caused harm to human health or the environment. However, for our residents who live in the area, this news will still be deeply troubling.

What is also concerning is the lack of proper monitoring and scrutiny by the EA of the data they received from Viridor. In order for these sites to run as required, it is important that our residents have confidence in the ability of agencies like yours to provide the highest levels of regulation. The report's findings only contribute to the erosion of that trust.

Despite the report, and the downgrading of Viridor's compliance rating from A to E, we are aware that the EA is still considering approving plans for Viridor to treat more waste at the Beddington site. The Council has opposed any increases and we are astonished that the EA is still even considering this. This is unequivocally the wrong decision.

As the agency responsible for ensuring the safe running and compliance of such sites, it is imperative that you hold Viridor to account and make every effort to restore public trust. As a result, we have written to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, as well as you, asking for the following:

- To publicly reassure residents that there is no public health risk.
- To take strong and appropriate enforcement action against Viridor.
- To make urgent changes to your processes and obtain independent monitoring of these sites that is then made publicly available.
- To commit to inspecting the Beddington site more frequently.

We see this as the only way in which public trust can be restored.

We would also like a clear explanation from you to our residents on four critical points:

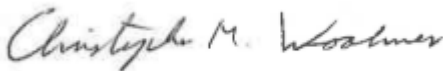
- What assurances will the EA be providing us that the improvement measures required of Viridor and detailed in your report are in place to an appropriate standard by 31 August 2025, and what robust action will be taken by the EA if not?
- How will the EA reassure our residents there is no health impact from these exceedances?
- Why is the EA still contemplating giving permission for more waste to be treated at Beddington, especially in light of Viridor's proven breaches and downgraded compliance rating?
- What concrete steps will the EA be taking to ensure Viridor provides transparent and regular communications to residents in the local area, who are now deeply concerned about Viridor's ability to manage the site safely and responsibly?

We look forward to your urgent response on these matters.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. Lewis', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Barry Lewis
Leader of the Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Christopher M. Woolmer', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Christopher Woolmer
Lead Member for the Environment