

Dear Lyndsey Stewart,

I sent the letter, below, to you earlier by mistake without a signature. Here is the amended letter. I checked with their website and the "Plain English Campaign" ([www.plainenglish.co.uk](http://www.plainenglish.co.uk)) are able to give advice on how to communicate technical information clearly without loss of meaning.

I would appreciate your comments,

Regards,  
Ann Pettitt.

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Dear Lyndsey Stewart,

I have been sent the Regional Waste Plan consultation document. I don't know why I have been chosen to receive it, but if I were to respond sensibly, I would need a translation provided in plain English. I am a graduate in English with a good general scientific knowledge, yet I struggle to make sense of this document and the options suggested for dealing with waste. Even the covering letter does not define "residual waste", while the survey itself is packed with scientific terms (e.g. "abiotic", "pyrolysis", "gasification", "high source segregated recycling") requiring better explanations than those provided – in language which can be clearly understood by a non-scientist. The vast majority of local authority councillors, who as members of planning committees will be making the important decisions on waste management, would not find themselves better informed by this document. It is not a matter of too much or too little information, but the way in which the information is given.

This is a pity, as I see from the maps provided that some of the "areas of search" (why not say "possible sites for new waste treatment facilities") outlined in red as "appropriate" are near where I live and I, like others living near me, might have strong views on which kind of waste treatment process we would or would not tolerate. Furthermore, the whole question of what we do with our rubbish arouses strong opinions in the public. Most people would agree that we cannot go on dumping in landfill, and need to choose the least polluting and most energy-efficient method of treating our non-recyclable waste. Potentially, there is an opportunity here for public opinion to support whatever option best fulfils these criteria, but the options, their advantages and disadvantages, need to be put far more clearly before the public if we are to play a genuinely constructive role.

I'm afraid, as a consultation exercise, I think it's back to the drawing board. I suggest the Plain English Campaign might be a good source of advice.

I shall be in contact with my local Community Council and my local authority councillor on this issue.

Regards,  
Ann pettitt