AUTUMN 2025

THE REAL COMMUNITY NEWS

An answer to Veolia from the L19 Campaign Group

EXPANSION OF THE GARSTON PLANT

The expansion of the Garston plant will triple production from 30,000 to 86,000 tonnes, making this the largest solvent recovery plant of it's kind in Europe. Most of the toxic waste will come from Intel in Ireland, transported across sea and land. So much for Veolia's claim that this process is Green.

Veolia applied for planning permission to put up four Towers, with a capacity increase over the site to 86000 tonnes a year. YET they have only put up three towers. According to supporting documents submitted to the Environment Agency in respect of the expansion, each tower is responsible for 14,000 tonnes per year. Therefore the capacity should be reduced by 14000 tonnes, until the fourth tower is erected and commissioned.

IS VEOLIA'S OPERATION "SAFE"?

Veolia stated in their 'Summer 2025 News' that they "use a tried and tested process called fractional distillation" which "is a very safe process for recycling solvents". We looked at other plants using this process and found a different story:



Veolia's fractional distillation plant in West Carrollton in Ohio, processes solvent waste. In 2009 flammable vapours released into the atmosphere found an ignition source leading to an explosion and fire (see image) that seriously injured two workers and damaged twenty residences. The plant was shut for three years.

Other fractional distillation plants have had fires or released toxic vapour clouds. In 2013 an explosion at the Westlake Chemical Plant in Geismar, Louisiana, caused by a "runaway reaction in a solvent purification tower", killed two and injured 114 people. The effects of the explosion were felt several miles away, and order to stay indoors was issued to residences and businesses within a two-mile (3.2km) radius of the plant.

SAFETY BREACHES

Veolia say they haven't breached their Environmental Permit at the Garston plant. But this claim only covers the first three months of 2025.

We found eight breaches of safety regulations for 2021. On 9th June the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) visited the Garston plant. As part of the subsequently issued safety notice, Veolia were told they had not acted in accordance with **their own risk assessment!**

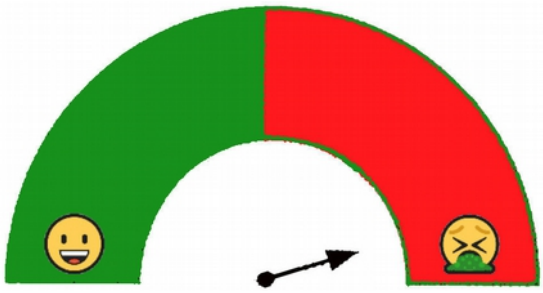
The HSE went on to say:
"Consequently you have also **not taken all measures necessary to prevent major accidents."**

WE DON'T WANT VEOLIA IN OUR COMMUNITY

The word community is used nine times in Veolia's 'Summer 2025 News'. If Veolia really cared about the Garston community they would move this operation to somewhere that isn't near where people live.

BEWARE OF VEOLIA FUNDING

We understand that cash starved charities, schools and community groups may be tempted by funding from companies such as Veolia.
But Veolia have been accused of 'Greenwashing' by opendemocracy.net and UKWIN. For example, they describe one of their incinerators as a “completely green plant”.



VEOLIA SMELLOMETER

VEOLIA WATCH: We are building up evidence of the environmental problems surrounding this Veolia plant. To help us you can keep an 'Incident Log’.

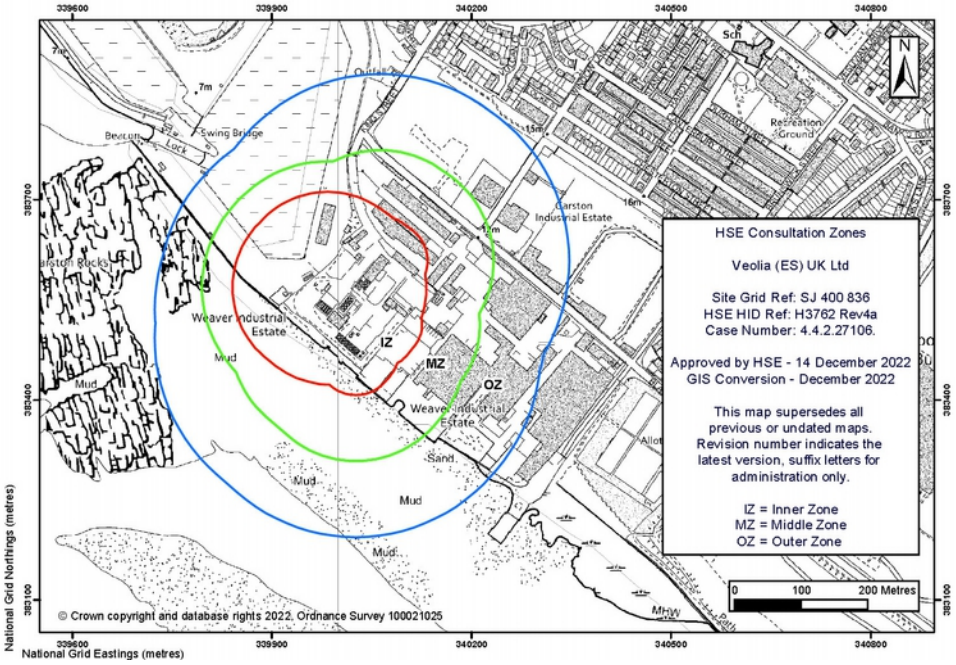
SMELLS

If Veolia have “conducted extensive research and testing into each and every report” of smells, then we would be interested to see these.

According to a Freedom of Information Requests (FOIs) lodged with Liverpool City Council and the Environment Agency, residents in Garston reported chemicals smells, such as acetone or burning plastic, coming from the Veolia plant **40 times** from Jan 2024 to July 2025.

BLAST ZONES

Veolia says that no blast areas exist around their plant. But the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) produce a “Hazardous Area Classification” map for the Veolia plant in Garston. This is politely called: "HSE Consultation Zones", and shows the area around the plant where Veolia have an immediate duty to **protect people from risk of fire or explosion.**



The map is dated 2022, so before the expansion of the Garston plant. It will be interesting to see how far these hazard zones stretch when the map is updated.

We also know that an explosion at the Flixborough chemical plant in Lincolnshire in 1974, carrying out the same process as Veolia in Garston, affected buildings three miles away. 28 people died and dozens of others were severely wounded.

INCINERATION OR CO-INCINERATION

Why do Veolia have a permit from the Environment Agency to Incinerate or Co-incinerate hazardous waste at Garston if they don't do it and don't intend to do it?

The main point is that whatever Veolia calls this process (of using the product from Fractional Distillation as fuel for their boilers), it can be highly dangerous for health and the environment.

Veolia's potentially explosive plant should not be sited anywhere near houses and schools!

VEOLIA HAVE 'HISTORY'

In June 2012, a New York jury fined Veolia (known as Vivendi then) $954.6 million for fraud.

In 2013 Veolia received the Pinocchio Award from Friends of the Earth in the category 'One for all, all for me' given to the company with the most aggressive policies on landgrabbing, or exploitation or destruction of natural resources.

In January 2014, Veolia imported 150 tonnes of chemical weapons from Syria to be burned at their High Temperature Incinerator in Ellesmere Port. This "caused uproar" in the town. Dangerous chemicals imported from all over the world continue to be burned in the plant.

In 2023, Global Witness reported on a Veolia "toxic landfill" in Colombia. Arsenic, mercury and other contaminants had infiltrated food and water sources of a nearby community. Infants were displaying serious and novel afflictions. Babies were being born without a brain and dying at birth.

In February 2025, Veolia paid out $53 million to the community of Flint, Michigan because of the poisoning of the water supply.