

CONSULTATION BY ADJOINING AUTHORITY

CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER COUNCIL – PLANNING APPLICATION

Ref: 09/02047/WAS

Waste Treatment Plant, Lostock Gralam, Northwich.

Background

The proposed site consists of 3.66ha of disused industrial land formerly containing a chlorine chemical works and is located off Griffiths Road, Lostock Gralam, Northwich, within the District of Cheshire West and Chester. The application, supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment, has been received by Cheshire West and Chester Council who will determine it and have now consulted this Council as a neighbouring Authority.

Viridor are one of two remaining companies bidding for the Cheshire Household Waste PFI Contract. The contract to be let by Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East Council's, will address the treatment and disposal of residual waste from all kerbside and household waste reception centres (HWRC's), i.e., the waste collected by both Council's, over the next 25 years. The contract will assist both Councils in meeting the EU Landfill Directive and National Targets to reduce the amount of biodegradable municipal waste going to landfill.

The successful bidder for the contract is expected to provide a waste treatment facility, ideally located centrally within Cheshire. Whilst waste collected locally to the facility would be delivered directly, a series, probably three, of waste bulking stations would be needed to serve more peripheral parts of the two Council areas. Separate applications for these facilities are expected. The other remaining bidder for the contract is likely to also submit planning applications within the near future.

Site Location

The site is located within an industrial area off Griffiths Road, Lostock that is also presently occupied by the Solvay Industrial Plant and the Brunner Mond Works. Recent planning approvals have also been given on adjoining land for a bio-energy plant and a rare metal recovery plant. Vacant parts of the industrial area are identified for waste uses within the Cheshire Replacement Waste Local Plan. The site is 2km east of Northwich Town Centre and approximately 2km west of the Cheshire East boundary near to Plumley and Pickmere.

Proposed Development

It is proposed to construct a mechanical and biological treatment (MBT) plant capable of handling 250,000 tonnes of waste a year made up of 225,000 tonnes of municipal waste and 25,000 tonnes of commercial and industrial wastes.

The main element of the MBT plant is contained within a large building (159m x 131m x 18.6m high) incorporating waste reception hall and mechanical separation hall where waste is initially sorted and shredded by a variety of processes and recycle is removed for reuse. The remaining wet organic element is then transferred to one of thirteen sealed bio-drying tunnels where it is kept for 8 days at a temperature 35°C. Air forced through the tunnels is passed through dust and bio-filters prior to discharge from a 27m high stack. The resulting bio-dried material is then further refined to remove any further recycle. The end product is a Solid Recovered Fuel which would be transferred by rail to the Ineos Energy from Waste Plant now under construction at Weston Point, Runcorn.

Waste from HWRC's would initially be separately handled to remove bulky material and recycle prior to be fed into the MBT plant.

An office and education facility building, car park and weighbridge are also proposed.

Reception of waste would be limited to the hours of 0700 to 1930 every day of the year, whilst waste processing would be a continuous process. All deliveries would be by road as would be the removal of recyclable material from the site. Residual waste would need to be taken by road to landfill sites; it is estimated that this would comprise 6% of imports. Total vehicles movements (HGV's) are expected to be a maximum of 62 incoming (62 outgoing) each day, plus staff car movements from the 45 permanent jobs anticipated. The Solid Recovered Fuel would be removed from site by utilising the adjoining rail link with one train anticipated daily.

Impact on Cheshire East

Should Viridor become the successful bidder for the Council's Waste PFI Contract and should this proposal be granted permission and built, all of Cheshire East's collected municipal waste and waste delivered to HWRC's would be treated at this facility. It is possible therefore that in the region of 20 HGV's a day would access the site from the Macclesfield area and similar number from Crewe. It is not considered that such numbers are likely to have a significant impact on the local road network.

The scale of the proposed buildings are in keeping with the surrounding uses and lower than the existing Brunner Mond plant, it is therefore considered that the proposal is unlikely to have any visual or landscape impact on the Borough.

The proposed buildings are designed to work under negative pressure so air is drawn into the buildings and passed through purposefully designed dust and bio-filters before being discharged through a stack. The air discharge will need to meet

the requirements of an Environmental Permit, issued, monitored and enforced by the Environmental Agency. The Council's Environmental Protection Officer has no objection to the proposal.

The more local environmental impacts would be considered by Cheshire West and Chester Council.

This application has been specifically submitted to serve the identified need to treat the waste collected by Cheshire West and Chester, and Cheshire East Councils. A second application to treat this waste source will also be submitted by the other bidder for the PFI Contract. It is considered important that any permissions that may be granted, limits the use of those facilities to this sole purpose. This would thereby ensure the unsuccessful bidder is unable to implement a permission that could otherwise seek to attract other waste contracts in an area that is already over provided with planning permissions for waste facilities. Existing planning permissions for the Bedminster Plant immediately next to this proposal and the very large Energy from Waste Plants and facilities at Ince Marshes and Weston Point, Runcorn will result in those and any further facilities having to unsustainably source the waste to operate those facilities from considerable distance, contrary to the principle of treating and disposing of waste close to source.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Council indicates to Cheshire West and Chester Council that it wishes to raise no objection to the proposed application, subject to conditions and or legal agreement restricting the use of the facility to that solely to serve the municipal waste needs of the two Councils.