

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE**

RPC SUB-GROUP – STATUTORY CONSULTATIONS

Date: 25 September 2007

Subject: Planning application consultation ref A/07/097

Site Address:	Gosford Silos, near Kidlington, Oxfordshire
Proposal:	Development of a waste reduction and materials recovery facility with ancillary developments
Local Planning Authority:	Oxfordshire County Council
Applicant:	Grundon Waste Management
Date consultation issued:	7 September 2007

Report of: **Regional Planner**

Recommendation:

The South East England Regional Assembly makes the following representations:

- Given the nature of the proposed waste management facility, it is considered that the proposal will contribute towards meeting the objectives of the regional waste strategy. Additionally, the county council should also explore the viability of other on-site waste treatment technologies as part of an integrated approach to waste management.

If the county council is minded to grant provision, it should also address the following through appropriately worded conditions and/or legal agreements to secure:

- Appropriate mitigation measures that may be required for the necessary traffic management improvements to be secured in line with Policy W16 of RPG9 and the draft South East Plan. Additionally, the potential for using rail transport should be fully explored.
- Appropriate mitigation measures to ensure that high environmental standards are maintained to accord with Policy E3 of RPG9.

I. Purpose of Report

- I.1 To assess the proposed development against the Regional Spatial Strategy (RPG9 plus Alterations) and the draft South East Plan , and set out the recommended consultation response for consideration and agreement.

2. Site Description

- 2.1 The application site is located adjacent to the Gosford Sidings, to the south of Kidlington and about 6km from Oxford. To the north west of the site, between it and the rail line, is an aggregates depot operated by Hanson Aggregates. Beyond the rail line lies the A34. To the south east of the site lies the Water Eaton Park and Ride facility. To the south west of the site is the A4165 and to the north east lies open countryside.
- 2.2 The site extends to approximately 1.62 hectares and lies within the Oxfordshire Green Belt. It is currently occupied by a redundant animal feed mill and associated grain storage silos.
- 2.3 The site is currently accessed via a traffic light-controlled junction off the A4165 adjacent to the junction of the Park and Ride facility. The access road to the site also provides access to an adjoining aggregates depot and a small county council highways department depot.
- 2.4 A site location plan is attached to this report.

3. Details of the Proposal and Background

- 3.1 The proposal site is covered by an extant planning permission for the industrial use of the area as an animal feed mill and grain silos. The site is identified as a potential waste site in the Oxfordshire Waste Sites Issues and Options consultation document published in February 2007.
- 3.2 The proposal seeks to construct a Waste Reduction and Material Recovery Facility (MRF) with ancillary developments. The waste to be processed for onward transfer would comprise commercial, non-hazardous industrial and source segregated household waste, together with non-segregated municipal solid waste (MSW). The MRF will also bulk up small quantities of hazardous waste and may receive some construction and demolition (C&D) waste. A visitor centre and welfare facilities will also be constructed.
- 3.3 The facility will process up to 150,000 tonnes of waste per annum (tpa) and recover aluminium, steel, paper, cardboard, plastics, glass and wood. Residual waste material will be processed into a fuel which could be exported off site for use in various industrial processes.
- 3.4 Waste imports and recovered materials exports will be carried out by a range of vehicles including Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCVs) and bulker lorries. Access to the site would be via the existing access road onto the A4165, which, the applicant states, would be improved as part of the development.

4. Relevant Policy Considerations

RPG9

- 4.1 The relevant issues and policies within the adopted Regional Spatial Strategy (RPG9) and Adopted Alterations on Waste and Minerals are considered to be:
 - i. Policies W3 and W4 – regional and sub-regional self-sufficiency
 - ii. Policies W5, W6 and W7 – targets for diversion from landfill, recycling and composting targets and waste management capacity requirements
 - iii. Policy W15 – hazardous waste
 - iv. Policy W16 – waste transport infrastructure
 - v. Policy W17 – location of waste management facilities
 - vi. Policy E3 – Green Belt
- 4.2 The above RPG9 policies on waste in 4.1 have been carried forward into the draft South East Plan, which is also material to the consideration of this application. The only substantive changes are in connection with Policy W3 on regional self-sufficiency and Policy W15 on hazardous waste.
- 4.3 Reference in this report to policies in RPG9 (adopted alterations) also apply to the draft South East Plan unless explicitly stated.
- 4.4 Other material considerations are identified as:
 - i. Adopted Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (1996)

5. Main Issue

- 5.1 The proposal seeks to establish a MRF facility on an industrial site. The site has not got a history of waste management but has been identified as a potential waste site in the Oxfordshire Waste Sites Issues and Options consultation document. The main issue(s) to address will therefore be whether the proposal aligns with a range of regional policy measures with particular emphasis on locational criteria policies in the Regional Waste Strategy.

6. Policy Assessment

Policies W17 and E3 – location of waste facilities and Green Belt

- 6.1 Policy W17 confirms that, in siting waste management facilities, priority should be given to existing sites with compatible land uses like previous/existing industrial land and good transport connections. Policy W17 also states that such facilities should not be precluded from the Green Belt provided it is the nearest appropriate location, there are no alternative sites, and it would not cause harm to the objectives of the designation.

- 6.2 The proposed development site has a history of industrial use and has a current planning permission for use as a grain store. Though the site is located in the Oxfordshire Green Belt, its proposed use for waste management is not considered inappropriate in Planning Policy Guidance 2 (PPG2) and Planning Policy Statement 10 (PPS 10). Green Belt Policy E3 of RPG9 further recognises the importance of improving the landscape, nature conservation and environmental value of these designations.
- 6.3 If the county council is minded to grant permission for this facility, it should ensure that high environmental standards are maintained and that this can be secured through an appropriate planning condition/legal agreement to accord with Green Belt policy objectives.
- 6.4 Provided that these are ensured, it is considered that the proposed development will be in line with Policy E3 of RPG9 (adopted alterations) and Policy W17 of the draft South East Plan.

Policy W16 – waste transport infrastructure

- 6.5 Policy W16 aims to reduce the transport and associated impacts of waste movement by encouraging the use of rail transport wherever possible.
- 6.6 The proposed site appears to have good transport connections to the strategic highway network. It is also located close to a railway line. A transport assessment carried out by the applicant (at the request of the local authority) indicates that the proposed facility would have no perceptible impact on the capacity of the Kidlington Roundabout or traffic on Oxford Road. However, the assessment recognises the need for improvements to the layout and phasing of the traffic signals in the vicinity. The transport study does not however assess the viability of using the nearby railway line as a waste transport option.
- 6.7 Given the conclusions of the transport assessment carried out, it appears that the development will not have an adverse effect on the local highway network. If the county council is minded to grant permission for this facility, it should however ensure that the necessary traffic management improvements can be secured through an appropriate planning condition/legal agreement to accord with Policy W16. Additionally, the potential for using rail transport should be fully explored.

Policies W3, W4, W5, W6 and W7 – regional and sub-regional self-sufficiency, waste management targets and capacity requirements

- 6.8 Policies W3 and W4 relate to the need for WPAs to be self sufficient by providing management capacity equivalent to the amount of waste arising and requiring management within their boundaries. Provision of capacity for recycling, composting and recovery should also be made to reflect targets set out in Policies W5 and W6 of the draft South East Plan. Additionally, the draft South East Plan forecasts a combined capacity shortfall of 0.3 million

tonnes for recycling MSW/C&I (commercial and industrial) waste in Oxfordshire up to 2015.

- 6.9 Closely aligned with targets set out in Policies W5 and W6 are the waste management capacity requirements by sub-region in Policy W7. The average tonnes of waste to be managed in Oxfordshire up to 2025 are set out and provide a benchmark for delivering the appropriate mix of facilities.
- 6.10 The proposed facility's targets for waste recovery (separating up to 90% of mixed recyclables) and contribution to diverting waste from landfill is considered to be broadly in line with regional waste targets. The facility will also contribute towards Oxfordshire becoming increasingly self sufficient in waste management and help meet the identified shortfall in capacity needs over the plan period.
- 6.11 It is therefore considered that the application is consistent with the objectives of Policies W3, W4, W5, W6, and W7 of RPG9 (adopted alterations) and the draft South East Plan.

Policy W15 – hazardous waste and integrated approach to waste management

- 6.12 Policy W15 sets out guidance on regional hazardous waste management requirements and gives priority to establishing a sub-regional network of hazardous waste treatment facilities across the region.
- 6.13 Though this facility will not treat hazardous waste or recycle Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) goods, it will serve as part of a network of bulking facilities for onward transfer to specialist treatment sites. This is in line with the overall strategy of providing for hazardous waste in the region.
- 6.14 Aside the bulking up of hazardous waste on site, it is also important to explore the viability of other waste treatment technologies like anaerobic digestion, composting and energy recovery. This integrated approach to waste management is supported in the draft South East Plan (Section D6, paragraph 2.4).
- 6.15 Given the nature of the proposed waste management facility, it is considered that the proposal will contribute towards meeting the objectives of Policy W15. Additionally, the county council should also explore the viability of other on-site waste treatment technologies as part of an integrated approach to waste management.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 Subject to the county council satisfying itself on the detailed issues outlined in this report, it is considered that the proposal would accord with the general principles established in RPG9 (adopted alterations) and the draft South East Plan.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 Members are requested to agree the following recommendation to the local authority:

The South East England Regional Assembly makes the following observations:

- Given the nature of the proposed waste management facility, it is considered that the proposal will contribute towards meeting the objectives of the regional waste strategy. Additionally, the county council should also explore the viability of other on-site waste treatment technologies as part of an integrated approach to waste management.

If the county council is minded to grant provision, it should also address the following through appropriately worded conditions and/or legal agreements to secure:

- Appropriate mitigation measures that may be required for the necessary traffic management improvements to be secured in line with Policy W16 of RPG9 and the draft South East Plan. Additionally, the potential for using rail transport should be fully explored.
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