

Review of an Environmental Permit under the Environmental Permitting (England & Wales) Regulations 2010 (“EPR”)

Decision document recording our decision-making process

We have decided to vary the Permit for Ellington Road Composting Facility operated by SITA UK Limited, as a result of an application made by the Operator.

The Permit number is EPR/UP3494ZL.

The Variation notice number is EPR/UP3494ZL/V003.

What this document is about

This is a decision document, which accompanies a variation notice.

This decision document:

- explains how the application has been determined
- provides a record of the decision-making process
- shows how all relevant factors have been taken into account
- justifies the specific conditions in the permit other than those in our generic permit template.

Preliminary information and use of terms

We refer to the Permit (both existing and as varied) as “the **Permit**” in this document; and to the variation of the Permit as “the **Variation**”.

The Operator of the Installation is SITA UK Limited known as “the **Operator**” in this document. We refer to Ellington Road Composting Facility as “the **Installation**”.

The Application was duly made on 02 September 2014

How this document is structured

- Our decision
- The legal framework
- How we took our decision
- Key issues in the determination
- Annex 1 – the decision checklist
- Annex 2 – Web publicising responses

1 Our decision

We have issued a Variation, which will allow the Operator to operate their facility as an Installation, subject to the conditions in the varied Permit.

This Variation does several different things:

- **First**, it gives effect to our decisions following the identification of the Operator as undertaking a “newly prescribed activity” (NPA) under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED);
- **Second**, it takes the opportunity to bring earlier variations into an up-to-date, consolidated Permit. The consolidated Permit should be easier to understand and use; and
- **Third**, it modernises the entire Permit to reflect our current template. The template reflects our modern regulatory permitting philosophy and was introduced because of a change in the governing legislation. This took place when the Pollution Prevention and Control (England and Wales) Regulations 2000 (“PPC”) were replaced in 2008 by a new statutory regime under the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2007 (now the 2010 version).

The introduction of new template conditions makes the Permit consistent with our current general approach and philosophy. Although the wording of some conditions has changed, while others have disappeared because of the new regulatory approach, it does not affect the level of environmental protection achieved by the Permit in any way.

We consider that, in reaching our decision, we have taken into account all relevant considerations and legal requirements and that the Permit will continue to ensure that a high level of protection is provided for the environment and human health.

The original Permit, issued on 11 February 2005, ensured that the facility would be operated in a manner which would ensure the protection of the environment specified in the existing Guidance at the time. To the extent that we have substantively altered the Permit as a result of this variation, the new requirements will provide a higher level of protection to that which was previously achieved.

As we explained above, we do not address changes to the Permit in this document, to the extent that they give effect to either the consolidation of earlier variations, or introduce new template conditions.

2 The legal framework

The original Permit was granted on 11 February 2005 under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and regulated under the Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994.

The Installation will be subject to the requirements of the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED) 2010/75/EU and regulated under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010 (SI 2010 No 675). The IED was transposed in England and Wales by the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales)(Amendment) Regulations 2013 on 27 February 2013.

The IED seeks to achieve a high level of protection for the environment taken as a whole from harmful effects of industrial activities. It does so by requiring each of the industrial installations to have a permit from the competent authority (in England, the Environment Agency, or for smaller Installations, the relevant Local Authority). The IED has increased the number of activities that require an Installations permit. These are predominantly regulated as “waste operations” and include (when exceeding specific thresholds described in IED):

- hazardous waste treatment for recovery;
- hazardous waste storage;
- biowaste treatment – recovery and/or disposal;
- treatment of slags and ashes
- metals shredding;
- pre-treatment of waste for incineration/co-incineration;
- biological production of chemicals; and
- independently operated wastewater treatment works serving only industrial activities subject to the Directive

Article 11 of the IED requires the relevant authority (the Environment Agency in this case) to ensure that the Installation is operated in such a way that all the appropriate preventative measures are taken against pollution, in particular through the application of Best Available Techniques (BAT). Under Article 15(2), the Permit must contain emission limit values (ELVs) (or equivalent parameters or technical measures) for any pollutants likely to be emitted from the Installation in significant quantities. These ELVs are to be based on BAT, but also on local factors and EU Environmental Quality Standards. The overarching requirement is to ensure a high level of protection for the environment and human health.

We are required by Article 13 of the IED to keep abreast of developments in BAT. In addition, Article 13 requires us to carry out a periodic review of the permit’s conditions, and to update them if necessary.

The IED also requires the European Commission to organise an exchange of information between EU Member States so that what are known as BAT reference documents (or BREF notes) can be published, creating a level playing field across the EU, providing a consistent set of standards for new

plant, to which regulatory authorities in the Member States can then have reference. These BREF notes are the basis for our own national sector technical guidance. The Commission is also required to update BREF notes on a regular basis. The waste treatment BREF notes are currently being reviewed and a final issue date is anticipated in 2016. Under the IED, all permits will be subject to review within four years of the publication of revised BREF notes. This means that we will need to do a further review against any new standards in the BREF notes at sometime in the future.

The IED is to be implemented over several years commencing from 7 January 2013. For existing installations operating “newly prescribed activities”, the relevant date for implementation is 7 July 2015.

3 How we reached our decision

It is the Operators responsibility to ensure they are correctly regulated for the activities they are carrying out. Following adoption of the IED, the Environment Agency has engaged in a range of briefings and communications with the waste industry sector to raise awareness of the implications of the Directive and the need to ensure their facilities are correctly regulated (particularly after the implementation date for newly prescribed activities).

Early in 2014, the Environment Agency provided further briefings to industry trade bodies and wrote to operators we believed may be implicated by these changes. We provided detailed information sheets that described the implications and the process operators should follow if they decided to have their activities permitted as Installations.

We confirmed that most facilities fell into one of two groups:

- Facilities permitted from April 2007
When these facilities were permitted, a thorough assessment would have been carried out to confirm whether the proposed activities were using “appropriate measures” as a standard to protect the environment.

This standard of protection is the same standards that would have been assessed against had the facilities applied as an Installation activity (i.e. BAT). The permit would have also been issued with modern conditions that ensured protection of the environment.

We consider that these facilities are effectively ‘IED-compliant’ in terms of the technical standard of the facility with the exception of the “newly prescribed activity”. For these facilities, we consider that, in general, no further technical assessment is required, so administrative variations are an appropriate mechanism to show the activities as Installation activities. The administrative variation is a necessary route for the Operator to formally ask for this activity to be included in their permit and for us to advertise that request on our Public Register.

It is understood that the Environment Agency granted permits for new waste activities under the Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994 beyond April 2007. Where a facility falls into this group, the Environment Agency shall determine whether or not the application was assessed using “appropriate measures”. Where it is determined that the application was assessed using “appropriate measures”, the application will be designated as an “administrative variation”.

- Facilities permitted before April 2007
For these facilities, a “normal” or “substantial” variation is appropriate because a detailed technical assessment is required on aspects of the application in addition to the administrative changes.

Substantial variations will only be relevant where the newly prescribed activity is being added to an existing installation permit.

This Variation

The original Permit was granted on 11 February 2005 and subsequently varied on 23 July 2012. We have reviewed the documentation submitted in support of the original permit and subsequent variation application in this determination. We are not satisfied that the standard of protection was assessed using appropriate measures. We have determined this Application as a normal variation. As the Variation will not have any negative effects on the environment, it is not a substantial variation and so does not require consulting on.

4 Key issues in the determination

Improvement conditions

Improvement conditions IC1 has been included as part of this variation. The site contains two biowaste treatment activities, an in-vessel composting (IVC) facility and an open windrows composting (OWC) facility. An odour management plan for the IVC activity is in place; however, there is no plan for odour management at the OWC facility. 'How to comply with your environmental permit' guidance requires all composting activities to have an odour management plan. We have therefore included an improvement condition (IC1) to ensure the operator produces an odour management plan.

Waste types

We compared the existing permitted waste codes against the WRAP Compost Quality Protocol (2012) and the existing Environment Agency standard rules for composting. There are a number of waste codes which do not meet the requirements of the above standards and are therefore not appropriate for biological treatment for composting. We have therefore removed these waste codes from the permit after agreement with the operator. Codes removed from the permit include:

- 15 02 03 absorbents, filter materials, wiping cloths and protective clothing other than those mentioned in 15 02 02.
- 19 02 10 combustible wastes other than those mentioned in 19 02 and 19 02 09.
- 19 12 08 textiles.
- 19 12 10 combustible waste (refuse derived fuel).
- 20 01 10 clothes.
- 20 01 11 textiles.
- 20 03 07 bulky waste.
- 03 03 07 mechanically separated rejects from pulping of paper waste and cardboard.
- 03 03 08 wastes from sorting of paper and cardboard destined for recycling.
- 17 05 04 soil and stones other than those mentioned in 17 05 03.

There are several other waste codes which the operator has justified keeping within the permit despite not being appropriate for composting as per the above standard. These include:

19 05 01 and 19 05 02 – none composted fractions of municipal, animal or vegetable matter.

The operator accepts an oversize green waste material which is used to line the bottom of the IVC tunnels to improve air flow. This material is accepted under the above codes. We have placed a restriction within the waste code description to oversize green waste only.

19 12 09 and 20 02 02 – minerals (soils and stones).

The operator accepts mineral wastes, specifically sand which is used as an additive to the compost like output (CLO) produced by the IVC process to maintain a required texture. The CLO is used as a restoration material for landfills.

Addition of waste code 19 12 12

Currently, the operator accepts a waste material comprised of fines after municipal solid waste has been mechanically treated and sorted. This fine material is then sent to the site to be processed within the IVC. This waste type has been accepted under the waste code for mixed municipal waste. As the waste has undergone a degree of mechanical treatment, it is required to be changed to 19 12 12. This code should have been included within the original permit. The substitution of this code with 20 03 01 will not change the nature of the facility nor will it increase the environmental risk, but is an acknowledgement of how this waste type should be recorded when received. We have therefore accepted the addition.

In order for this waste to be acceptable for biological treatment, the waste should be biodegradable. This waste material will only be accepted on site from one source also operated by SITA UK Limited. We have implemented a restriction to the waste code, requiring the operator to ensure that the waste is only comprised of organic fines from SITA UK Limited's Byker Reclamation Plant.

Future procedures will need to be implemented by the operator which appropriately demonstrates that this material is sufficiently biodegradable.

20 03 01 remains in the permit but has been restricted to biodegradable wastes only.

Bioaerosol emissions and monitoring

As part of updating the permit to modern standards, we have implemented up-to-date monitoring limits and procedures for bioaerosol emissions from the site. The following bioaerosols (Gram-negative bacteria, Total bacteria and *Aspergillus fumigatus*) have been identified as being emitted from the composting activities. ELVs based on BAT have been set for these

substances and others. Trigger levels and monitoring of bioaerosols shall be in accordance with the *Industry Standard Protocol for the monitoring of bioaerosols* and the Environment Agency's *Guidance on the evaluation of bioaerosol risk assessments for composting facilities*. The site is within 250 m of a sensitive receptor.

Addition of street sweeping residue transfer station waste operation

This variation recognises that an existing waste transfer station operation is undertaken at the site. We have added a separate waste transfer operation as a result. This waste code was included on the original permit but is unsuitable for composting. The waste is received on site and stored prior to recovery off-site. There is no treatment of this waste and waste is stored on an impermeable surface with a sealed drainage system. This variation clarifies the position of this waste code.

Point source emissions

This variation does not add any monitoring requirements to the permit. However, this variation includes current emission points not currently acknowledged by the previous permit. The site collects and discharges clean, uncontaminated site surface water from roofs and non operational areas for collection within a surface water balancing pond. This pond then discharges clean surface waters to a brook, Potland Burn.

Annex 1 – decision checklist

This document should be read in conjunction with the Duly Making checklist, the application and supporting information and notice.

Aspect considered	Justification / Detail	Criteria met
Consultation		
Responses to web publicising	<p>The web publicising advertising responses (Annex 2) were taken into account in the decision.</p> <p>The decision was taken in accordance with our guidance.</p> <p>No public responses were received in response to the web publicising of the application.</p>	✓
Operator		
Control of the facility	We are satisfied that the applicant (now the operator) is the person who will have control over the operation of the facility after the grant of the permit. The decision was taken in accordance with EPR RGN 1 Understanding the meaning of operator.	✓
The facility		
The regulated facility	<p>The extent/nature of the facilities taking place at the site required clarification.</p> <p>The decision on the facility was taken in accordance with RGN 2.</p> <p>The regulated facility is an installation which comprises the following activities listed in Part 2 of Schedule 1 to the Environmental Permitting Regulations and the following directly associated activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biowaste treatment (Section 5.4 A(1)(b)(i)) – in-vessel composting • Biowaste treatment (Section 5.4 A(1)(b)(i)) – open windrows composting • Raw material storage • Physical treatment of waste • Storage of waste • Compost storage • Process water collection and storage • Surface water collection, storage and discharge 	✓

Aspect considered	Justification / Detail	Criteria met
		Yes
	<p>There are also specified waste operations which have no technical relationship with the installation activities. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wood shredding and recycling facility • Street sweeping waste transfer station 	
European Directives		
Applicable Directives	<p>All applicable European Directives have been considered in the determination of the application.</p> <p>The Industrial Emissions Directive.</p>	✓
The site		
Extent of the site of the facility	<p>The operator has provided a plan which we consider is satisfactory, showing the extent of the site of the facility. A plan is included in the permit and the operator is required to carry on the permitted activities within the site boundary.</p>	✓
Biodiversity, Heritage, Landscape and Nature Conservation	<p>The application is within the relevant distance criteria of a site of heritage, landscape or nature conservation, and/or protected species or habitat.</p> <p>A full assessment of the application and its potential to affect the sites has been carried out as part of the permitting process. We consider that the application will not affect the features of the site.</p>	✓
Environmental Risk Assessment and operating techniques		
Environmental risk	<p>We have reviewed the operator's assessment of the environmental risk from the facility.</p> <p>The operator's risk assessment is satisfactory.</p>	✓
Operating techniques	<p>We have reviewed the techniques used by the operator and compared these with the relevant guidance notes –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPPC S5.06 – Guidance for the Treatment of Hazardous and Non-Hazardous Waste; <p>The proposed techniques/emission levels for priorities for</p>	✓

Aspect considered	Justification / Detail	Criteria met
		Yes
	<p>control are in line with the benchmark levels contained in the above technical guidance notes and we consider them to represent appropriate techniques for the facility.</p> <p>We are satisfied with the BAT assessment provided by the operator which adequately addresses the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pre-acceptance of waste • acceptance of waste • storage and handling of waste • process (treatment) description • fugitive emissions to air • fugitive emissions to surface and groundwater (secondary containment, site drainage plan) • odour management • point source emissions to air, water or land (where relevant) • monitoring • accidents <p>The acceptance criteria of mechanically separated fines under code 19 12 12 to assess biodegradability will be considered outside of this variation application. All other pre-acceptance criteria and waste acceptance criteria specified not relating to the biodegradability of mechanically separated fines have been assessed against specified BAT.</p>	
The permit conditions		
Updating permit conditions during consolidation	We have updated previous permit conditions to those in the new generic permit template as part of permit consolidation. The new conditions have the same meaning as those in the previous permit(s).	✓
Raw materials	We have specified limits and controls on the use of raw materials and fuels. Specification for fuel oil is included in line with The Sulphur Content of Liquid Fuels (England and Wales) Amendment) Regulations 2014.	✓
Waste types	We have specified the permitted waste types, descriptions and quantities, which can be accepted at the regulated facility. We are satisfied that the operator can accept these wastes because they have the necessary infrastructure, operating systems and technical capability	✓

Aspect considered	Justification / Detail	Criteria met
		Yes
	<p>to manage these wastes in an appropriate manner.</p> <p>The wastes types can be treated via composting as they are included in the Composting Quality Protocol (CQP) and/or in the Environment Agency standard rules permit templates for biowaste treatment facilities.</p> <p>We have excluded several wastes types from the permit. See Key issues for further information.</p> <p>We made these decisions with respect to waste types in accordance with our Technical Guidance Note – <i>Framework for assessing suitability of wastes going to anaerobic digestion, composting and biological treatment.</i></p>	
Improvement conditions	<p>Based on the information on the application, we consider that we need to impose improvement conditions.</p> <p>We have imposed improvement conditions to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the appropriate measures are in place to prevent pollution from odour through the submission of an odour management plan for the open windrow composting activity. <p>See Key Issues section of the decision document.</p>	✓
Incorporating the application	<p>We have specified that the operator must operate the permit in accordance with descriptions in the application, including all additional information received as part of the determination process. These descriptions are specified in the Operating Techniques table in the permit.</p>	✓
Emission limits	<p>We have decided that emission limits should be set for the parameters listed in the permit.</p> <p>Open windrows composting</p> <p>The following bioaerosols (Total bacteria and <i>Aspergillus Fumigatus</i>) have been identified as being emitted in significant quantities and ELVs and/or equivalent parameters or technical measures based on BAT have been set for these substances and others.</p>	✓

Aspect considered	Justification / Detail	Criteria met
		Yes
	<p>In-vessel composting</p> <p>The following bioaerosols (Gram-negative bacteria, Total bacteria and <i>Aspergillus fumigatus</i>) have been identified as being emitted in significant quantities and ELVs and/or equivalent parameters or technical measures based on BAT have been set for these substances and others.</p>	
Monitoring	<p>We have decided that monitoring should be carried out for the parameters listed in the permit, using the methods detailed and to the frequencies specified.</p> <p>These monitoring requirements have been imposed in order to demonstrate compliance with the conditions of the permit for operations requiring the management of bioaerosols emissions. We made these decisions in accordance with <i>Industry Standard Protocol for the monitoring of bioaerosols</i> which is considered the most appropriate TGN for this activity.</p>	✓
Reporting	<p>We have specified reporting in the permit.</p> <p>We have specified reporting in the permit. As the monitoring of point source emissions to air is required quarterly, reporting is also required quarterly. Reporting forms have been prepared to facilitate reporting of data in a consistent format. These reporting requirements are deemed sufficient and proportional for the Installation. We made these decisions in accordance with the <i>Industry Standard Protocol for the monitoring of bioaerosols</i>.</p>	✓
Operator Competence		
Environment Management System	There is no known reason to consider that the operator will not have the management systems to enable it to comply with the permit conditions. The decision was taken in accordance with RGN 5 on Operator Competence.	✓
Technical competence	<p>Technical competency is required for activities permitted.</p> <p>The operator is a member of an agreed scheme.</p>	✓
Relevant Convictions	The National Enforcement Database has been checked to ensure that all relevant convictions have been	✓

Aspect considered	Justification / Detail	Criteria met
		Yes
	<p>declared.</p> <p>No relevant convictions were found.</p> <p>The operator satisfies the criteria in RGN 5 on Operator Competence.</p>	
Financial provision	There is no known reason to consider that the operator will not be financially able to comply with the permit conditions. The decision was taken in accordance with RGN 5 on Operator Competence.	✓

Annex 2 – Web publicising

No responses were received in response to the web publication.