

# 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 Stevenage Transfer Station operated by Biffa Waste Services Limited, as a result of an application made by the Operator.

The Permit number is EPR/SP3130RY

The Variation notice number is EPR/SP3130RY/V002

## 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 Biffa Waste Services Limited: we call Biffa Waste Services Limited “the **Operator**” in this document. We refer to Biffa Waste Services Limited’s Stevenage Transfer Station as “the **Installation**”.

The Application was duly made on 26 January 2015.

## 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

### 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 16/01/03, 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 deliver 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 16/01/03 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 of 7 July 2015 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 standard 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 16 January 2003 and partially superseded by an installation permit for the treatment and storage of hazardous waste for disposal (EPR/WP3037SN) on 28 April 2006. The Permit was transferred to Biffa Waste Services Limited on 12 October 2015. We have reviewed the documentation submitted in support of the original permit and subsequent variation applications 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 should 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**

This variation implements the changes brought about by the IED for “existing facilities operating newly prescribed activities” and completes the transition of this facility from a waste operation to an IED Installation. The operator provided a risk assessment and BAT assessment for the operation of the Stevenage Transfer Station as part of a supporting statement and associated appendices. This included an assessment of operations against the following Technical Guidance Notes:

- IPPC S5.06 – Guidance for the Treatment of Hazardous and Non-Hazardous Waste;

The assessment included consideration of the following:

- 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
- monitoring
- accidents

However, we are not satisfied that BAT has been applied for all of the listed installation activities. Improvement condition IC20 has been included as part of this variation. It requires the operator to review and update their operating techniques against appropriate BAT. While we consider that the operations were previously assessed against appropriate measures available at the time of the original application, we need to ensure that measures in the permit meet the requirements of BAT while operating as an installation. We have implemented an improvement programme to ensure that current operating measures are in line with up-to-date BAT as part of the movement of a waste operation to an installation.

An improvement condition has been including requiring the operator to submit to the Environment Agency for approval a Fire Prevention Plan. The Fire Prevention Plan is

required to be submitted three months following publication of the Environment Agency's revised Fire Prevention Plan guidance.

As part of the application in addition to the variation to transition IED newly prescribed activities to installations activities, the operator has included proposals for the following:

- Inclusion of additional land to the site permit boundary;
- Increase of waste accepted from up to 500 tonnes per year to up to 3,000 tonnes per year; and
- Inclusion of a waste operation for the storage and transfer of non-hazardous hygiene waste.

We agreed to accept these changes, however, in order to ensure that the proposals meet the relevant requirements, pre-operational measures have been specified in the permit variation. These requirements must be completed prior to the commencement of the operations listed above. The pre-operational measures require the operator to complete the following.

Prior to extension of the permit boundary:

- Submit to the Environment Agency for approval a Site Condition Report for the proposed extension area;
- Submit to the Environment Agency for approval a revised site plan including proposed infrastructure layout and waste storage arrangements; and
- Submit to the Environment Agency for approval a written review and action plan for the revision of the drainage infrastructure of the operational areas.

Prior to the increase in waste accepted on site from 500 tonnes to 3,000 tonnes per year:

- Submit a written report to the Environment Agency for approval that includes:
  - (a) the results of an assessment of environmental risks from the site
  - (b) proposals for appropriate measures to mitigate any impacts where the assessment determines they have the potential to be significant.

Prior to the commencement of hygiene waste storage and transfer operations:

- Submit written procedures for approval to meet all the relevant BAT requirements for the storage and transfer of hygiene waste;
- Submit a written report to the Environment Agency for approval that includes:
  - (c) the results of an assessment of environmental risks from the site
  - (d) proposals for appropriate measures to mitigate any impacts where the assessment determines they have the potential to be significant; and
- Submit an odour management plan for the hygiene waste activity to the Environment Agency for written approval.

## Annex 1 – decision checklist

This document should be read in conjunction with the application and supporting information and notice.

Aspect considered	Justification / Detail	Criteria met
<b>Consultation</b>		
Responses to web publicising	No responses were received as a result of the web publicising.	✓
<b>Operator</b>		
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.	✓
<b>The facility</b>		
The regulated facility	<p>The extent/nature of the facilities taking place at the site required clarification.</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> <p><u>Listed activities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S5.3 A(1) (a) (iv) Disposal or recovery of hazardous waste with a capacity exceeding 10 tonnes per day involving repackaging prior to submission to any of the activities listed in Section 5.1 or 5.3.</li> <li>• S5.3 A(1) (a) (iii) Disposal or recovery of hazardous waste with a capacity exceeding 10 tonnes per day involving blending or mixing prior to submission to any of the activities listed in Section 5.1 or 5.3.</li> <li>• S5.3 A(1) (a) (ii) Disposal or recovery of hazardous waste with a capacity exceeding 10 tonnes per day involving physico-chemical treatment (hazardous container cleaning and washing).</li> <li>• S5.6 A(1) (a) Temporary storage of hazardous waste in a facility with a total capacity exceeding 50 tonnes pending any of the activities listed in Section 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3.</li> </ul> <p><u>Directly associated activities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Storage of washed uncontaminated packaging waste</li> <li>• Raw material storage</li> <li>• Process water collection and storage</li> <li>• Surface water collection and storage</li> </ul> <p>The regulated facility also includes a waste operation at which the following recovery and disposal operations will be undertaken for the storage and treatment of non-hazardous waste:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treatment consisting only of sorting, separation, bailing, or compaction of non- hazardous waste into different components for disposal or recovery.</li> </ul>	✓

Aspect considered	Justification / Detail	Criteria met Yes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Storage of non-hazardous packaging waste, this packaging arising from the on-site bulking and repackaging of non-hazardous waste.</li> <li>• Washing of non-hazardous containers in the container washing area that arise from the on-site bulking and repackaging of non-hazardous waste for disposal (no more than 50 tonnes per day) or recovery.</li> <li>• Separation, sorting and storing of non-hazardous WEEE from other wastes.</li> </ul> <p>Following completion of specified pre-operational conditions, the facility will be permitted for the storage and transfer of hygiene waste as a waste operation.</p>	
<b>European Directives</b>		
Applicable Directives	All applicable European Directives have been considered in the determination of the application.	✓
<b>The site</b>		
Extent of the site of the facility	<p>The operator has submitted proposals to extend the site permit boundary. Pre-operational conditions have been specified requiring the operator to submit to the Environment Agency for approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Site Condition Report for the extension area;</li> <li>• A revised site layout plan; and</li> <li>• Revised site drainage infrastructure proposals.</li> </ul> <p>The extension of the site permit boundary will only be authorised upon completion of the pre-operational measures. This proposed extension has not been assessed as part of this variation.</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>The nearest boundary of the Knebworth Wood SSSI lies within 400 metres of the site. The features of interest of the SSSI (mixed deciduous woodland) are unlikely to be adversely affected by the installation, due to distance and the fact that there are no process emissions, just fugitive emissions which are controlled by the permit.</p> <p>We have not formally consulted on the application. The decision was taken in accordance with our guidance.</p>	✓
<b>Environmental Risk Assessment and operating techniques</b>		
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	The operation of the facility has recently transferred to Biffa Waste Services Limited. The new operator is conducting a review and revision of the existing site operating techniques. We have therefore included an improvement condition in the notice which requires a review of the site's operating techniques within 6 months.	✓



Aspect considered	Justification / Detail	Criteria met
		Yes
<b>The permit conditions</b>		
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 permits.	✓
Raw materials	We have not specified limits and controls on the use of raw materials and fuels.	✓
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 to manage these wastes in an appropriate manner.	✓
Improvement conditions	Based on the information on the application, we consider that we need to impose improvement conditions. We have imposed improvement conditions to ensure that:  See Key Issues section of the decision document.	✓
Pre-operational conditions	Based on the information in the application, we consider that we need to impose pre-operational conditions.  See Key Issues section of the decision document.	✓
Incorporating the application	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.	✓
Reporting	We have specified reporting in the permit. 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 Regulatory Guidance Note 4 – Setting standards for environmental protection	✓
<b>Operator Competence</b>		
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.	✓