

Permitting Decisions- Bespoke Permit

We have decided to grant the permit for Sonoco Energy Centre operated by E.ON UK Heat Limited.

The permit number is EPR/AP3904SB.

The application is for an Environmental Permit to operate a new energy centre at Sonoco Board Mill, Stainland, Halifax. The energy centre will comprise of a 7.58 MWth Combined Heat and Power (CHP) natural gas fired spark ignition engine and a 11.61 MWth natural gas fired boiler. The combined thermal input of the facility is 19.19 MWth. The CHP engine will be supplemented by the boiler to provide heat for processes taking place at the site.

We consider in reaching that decision we have taken into account all relevant considerations and legal requirements and that the permit will ensure that the appropriate level of environmental protection is provided.

Purpose of this document

This decision document provides a record of the decision-making process. It:

- summarises the decision making process in the decision considerations section to show how the main relevant factors have been taken into account
- highlights key issues in the determination
- shows how we have considered the consultation responses

Unless the decision document specifies otherwise we have accepted the applicant's proposals.

Read the permitting decisions in conjunction with the environmental permit.

Key issues of the decision

Air quality

The applicant provided an assessment of the impact of emissions to air with the application which is detailed in document SONOCO CORES AND PAPER LTD SONOCO ALCORE, HALIFAX AIR QUALITY ASSESSMENT, reference ST18142 and dated 29th January 2021. We have reviewed the assessment and

are satisfied that it has taken into account all relevant ecological and human health receptors, that the model and its inputs are appropriate and that the assessment has been carried out in accordance with our guidance.

With regard to existing sensitive human receptors, the maximum modelled PCs and PECs have been compared against the relevant air quality objectives to determine the risk of exceedance. The results confirm there will be no exceedances of the relevant air quality objectives for the receptors considered. We agree with the applicant's conclusions that the impact of the emissions at human receptors is insignificant.

The applicant assessed the impact of emissions on relevant sensitive receptors within the screening distances of the site. We agree with the applicant's conclusions that there will be no significant effect on the ecological receptors alone or in combination.

Decision considerations

Confidential information

A claim for commercial or industrial confidentiality has not been made.

Identifying confidential information

We have not identified information provided as part of the application that we consider to be confidential.

The decision was taken in accordance with our guidance on confidentiality.

Consultation

The consultation requirements were identified in accordance with the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations (2016) and our public participation statement.

The application was publicised on the GOV.UK website.

We consulted the following organisations:

UK Health Security Agency (formerly PHE)

Food Standards Agency

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

Calderdale Council, Local authority

The comments and our responses are summarised in the [consultation responses](#) section.

Operator

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 our guidance on legal operator for environmental permits.

The regulated facility

We considered the extent and nature of the facility at the site in accordance with 'RGN2 'Understanding the meaning of regulated facility'.

The operator has provided the grid reference for the emission points from the medium combustion plant.

The extent of the facility is defined in the site plan and in the permit. The activities are defined in table S1.1 of the permit.

This permit applies to only one part of the installation which is for Medium Combustion Plant Comprising 1x 7.58MWth gas-fired CHP spark engine and 1 x 11.61MWth gas fired boiler which are a directly associated activity to the activity listed under schedule 1 of EPR. The names and permit numbers of the operator of the other part of the installation are detailed in the permit's introductory note.

The site

The operator has provided a plan which we consider to be satisfactory.

This shows the extent of the site of the facility including the discharge points.

The plan shows the location of the part of the installation to which this permit applies on that site.

The plan is included in the permit.

Site condition report

The operator has provided a description of the condition of the site, which we consider is satisfactory. The decision was taken in accordance with our guidance on site condition reports.

Nature conservation, landscape, heritage and protected species and habitat designations

We have checked the location of the application to assess if it is within the screening distances we consider relevant for impacts on nature conservation, landscape, heritage and protected species and habitat designations. The application is within our screening distances for these designations.

We have assessed the application and its potential to affect sites of nature conservation, landscape, heritage and protected species and habitat designations identified in the nature conservation screening report as part of the permitting process.

We consider that the application will not affect any site of nature conservation, landscape and heritage, and/or protected species or habitats identified.

We have not consulted Natural England.

The decision was taken in accordance with our guidance.

Environmental risk

We have reviewed the operator's assessment of the environmental risk from the facility.

The operator's risk assessment is satisfactory.

The assessment shows that, applying the conservative criteria in our guidance on environmental risk assessment or similar methodology supplied by the operator and reviewed by ourselves, all emissions may be screened out as environmentally insignificant.

Climate change adaptation

We have assessed the climate change adaptation risk assessment.

We consider the climate change adaptation risk assessment is satisfactory.

General operating techniques

We have reviewed the techniques used by the operator and compared these with the relevant guidance notes and we consider them to represent appropriate techniques for the facility.

The operating techniques that the applicant must use are specified in table S1.2 in the environmental permit.

Operating techniques for emissions that screen out as insignificant

Emissions of Nitrous Oxides have been screened out as insignificant, and so we agree that the applicant's proposed techniques are Best Available Techniques (BAT) for the installation.

We consider that the emission limits included in the installation permit reflect the BAT for the sector.

National Air Pollution Control Programme

We have considered the National Air Pollution Control Programme as required by the National Emissions Ceilings Regulations 2018. By setting emission limit values in line with technical guidance we are minimising emissions to air. This will aid the delivery of national air quality targets. We do not consider that we need to include any additional conditions in this permit.

Emission Limits

Emission Limit Values (ELVs) have been added for the following substances:

Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x)

Monitoring

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.

These monitoring requirements have been included in order for the operator to demonstrate compliance with the emission limits specified in the permit.

We made these decisions in accordance with Medium Combustion Plant guidance.

Based on the information in the application we are satisfied that the operator's techniques, personnel and equipment have either MCERTS certification or MCERTS accreditation as appropriate.

Reporting

We have specified reporting in the permit.

We made these decisions in accordance with Medium Combustion Plant guidance.

Management System

We are not aware of any reason to consider that the operator will not have the management system to enable it to comply with the permit conditions.

The decision was taken in accordance with the guidance on operator competence and how to develop a management system for environmental permits.

Previous performance

We have assessed operator competence. There is no known reason to consider the applicant will not comply with the permit conditions.

No relevant convictions were found. The operator satisfies the criteria in our guidance on operator competence.

Financial competence

There is no known reason to consider that the operator will not be financially able to comply with the permit conditions.

Growth duty

We have considered our duty to have regard to the desirability of promoting economic growth set out in section 108(1) of the Deregulation Act 2015 and the guidance issued under section 110 of that Act in deciding whether to grant this permit.

Paragraph 1.3 of the guidance says:

“The primary role of regulators, in delivering regulation, is to achieve the regulatory outcomes for which they are responsible. For a number of regulators, these regulatory outcomes include an explicit reference to development or growth. The growth duty establishes economic growth as a factor that all specified regulators should have regard to, alongside the delivery of the protections set out in the relevant legislation.”

We have addressed the legislative requirements and environmental standards to be set for this operation in the body of the decision document above. The guidance is clear at paragraph 1.5 that the growth duty does not legitimise non-compliance and its purpose is not to achieve or pursue economic growth at the expense of necessary protections.

We consider the requirements and standards we have set in this permit are reasonable and necessary to avoid a risk of an unacceptable level of pollution. This also promotes growth amongst legitimate operators because the standards

applied to the operator are consistent across businesses in this sector and have been set to achieve the required legislative standards.

Consultation Responses

The following summarises the responses to consultation with other organisations, our notice on GOV.UK for the public, and the way in which we have considered these in the determination process.

Responses from organisations listed in the consultation section:

Response received from UK Health Security Agency

Brief summary of issues raised:

The main emissions of potential concern are oxides of nitrogen and carbon monoxide to air. The applicant has presented an air quality assessment and concluded that emissions do not exceed air quality objectives and are not significant. UKHSA note that reducing public exposures to non-threshold pollutants (such as particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide) below air quality standards has potential public health benefits. We support approaches which minimise or mitigate public exposure to non-threshold air pollutants and address inequalities (in exposure) and encourage their consideration during site design, operational management, and regulation. Based on the information contained in the application supplied to us, UKHSA has no significant concerns regarding the risk to the health of the local population from the installation.

Summary of actions taken: None required.