

**HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
Decision Report**

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Regulatory Committee
<b>Date:</b>	13 September 2023
<b>Title:</b>	Development of an anaerobic digestion facility and waste transfer station, including partial demolition and reuse of existing buildings and infrastructure at Alton Materials Recovery Facility, A31 Alton GU34 4JD (No. 33619/008) EH141
<b>Report From:</b>	Assistant Director of Waste & Environmental Services

**Contact name:** Mark Sennitt

**Tel:** 0370 7795509

**Email:** [Mark.Sennitt@hants.gov.uk](mailto:Mark.Sennitt@hants.gov.uk)

**Recommendation**

1. That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the conditions listed in **Appendix A** and completion of a section 106 agreement to secure restrictions to prevent Heavy Good Vehicle U-turns on the A31 at Froyle.

**Executive Summary**

2. The application refers to an existing Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) and Waste Transfer Station (WTS) located to the south of the A31 and to the east of Holybourne and Alton.
3. The existing facility is well-established is a safeguarded under Policy 26 (Safeguarding – waste infrastructure) of the [Hampshire Minerals Waste Plan \(2013\)](#) (HMWP).
4. The proposals seek to replace the on-site MRF to provide an Anaerobic Digester (AD). The on-site WTS will be retained.
5. The rationale for the development, in part, due the construction and operation of a recently consented MRF at Chickenhall Lane, Eastleigh (resolved planning permission [CS/22/92463](#)). Once completed the existing WTS at the application site will become redundant (at which point construction work can take place on-site).
6. The works comprise the demolition of part of existing building and the provision of the following:

- Waste reception, pre-treatment and odour abatement facility;
  - Pasteurisation plant;
  - Anaerobic digestion and buffering tanks;
  - Gas treatment facility (also referred to as the Gas to Grid facility);
  - Combined Heat and Power Units; and
  - Emergency Flare.
7. The existing eastern end of the MRF and WTS building would be partially demolished to enable the construction of the AD tank area. The remaining building would be re-purposed to provide a WTS and the AD waste reception and processing activities. Gas treatment, CHP engines, flare and a further digestate tank would be located to the north of the site. Other elements of the existing infrastructure that would be retained and repurposed include:
- Weighbridges and Weighbridge Office;
  - Administration and Welfare Building;
  - Internal roads, hardstanding's, and car parks;
  - Fire tank and pumps;
  - Drainage and services; and
  - Landscaping.
8. There would be a below ground connection to the local gas distribution network.
9. The existing building is some 15.2 metres (m) in height. The replacement AD tanks will be 12.97m above ground level. The overall height of the proposed development will 2.23m lower than the maximum height of the existing building.
10. The proposed AD facility will use kerb site and commercial organic waste products and not crops grown specifically for this purpose.
11. The AD process converts organic waste to provide biomethane gas primarily for export into the local gas distribution network. A by-product of the process is digestates which are then used as fertilizer.
12. A below ground pipe connecting the AD Facility to the local gas main (which crosses the eastern section of the site) would be constructed, along with a kiosk containing apparatus for connection into an existing gas main that runs

through the eastern portion of the site. Two CPH engines are proposed, which will use biogas to generate electricity to be used on-site to provide heat, to maintain optimum operating temperatures and power for the AD process.

13. Access arrangements will be unchanged from the existing site and all traffic, to include HGV traffic, will continue to use the A31 to both access and exit the site. With regard to HGV movements the TA states that for the period 2016-2019 there were an average of 126 two-way HGV trips per day associated with the existing MRF/WTS. The proposed development anticipates some 113 two-way HGV movements per day. These HGV movements will include those transporting digestates off-site.
14. The proposed development is not an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development under the [Town & Country Planning \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations 2017](#).
15. Key issues raised are:
  - The principle of the use and need;
  - Highway implications, HGV movements and routes;
  - Ecological issues and Biodiversity Net Gain;
  - Visual impact to include that of the new buildings, the emergency flare and odour stack;
  - Landscaping;
  - Contamination risks to include pollution to local groundwater sources and the River Wey;
  - Potential light pollution;
  - Odour;
  - Source of food waste and implications in terms of impact on the Special Protection Area;
  - Storage and use of digestate.
16. The planning application is being considered by the Regulatory Committee due to the interest in the site and at the request of Councillor Kemp-Gee.
17. A committee site visit by Members took place on 19 June 2023 in advance of the proposal being considered by the Regulatory Committee.
18. The acceptability of the sites location as a waste site has already been determined through the grant of previous planning permissions at the site. The focus here is on the changes proposed to the waste use. It is considered that the proposed AD is an appropriate form of waste development in that it replaces one safeguarded site with another meeting

Policy 26 (Safeguarding – waste infrastructure) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#). Comparisons should therefore be made between the impact of the proposed AD/WTS use with that of the existing MRF/WTS. The proposed AD use will divert organic waste from landfill and create biomethane which will be used in the local gas network and to generate electricity to power and heat on-site facilities and export electricity to the national grid. The existing MRF on-site will be redundant following completion of the relocation of MRF capacity to Chickenhall Lane, Eastleigh. The proposed AD will sit alongside the existing WTS on site within an established site that has the established infrastructure to support the proposed use.

19. The scale and massing of the proposed buildings and structures are (with the exception of the odour stack) no higher than the existing building. The proposals seek to replace a single structure on part of the site (the existing building will be retained in part to accommodate the WTS) with a number of smaller buildings which will add visual interest to the site. The application is supported by a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment which demonstrates that the proposed buildings will not harm the character of the local area as compared to the existing buildings. Impact on the wider area to include the South Downs National Park in terms of visual impacts and light pollution have also been considered. Policy CP19 (Development in the countryside) of the [East Hampshire and South Downs Joint Core Strategy \(2014\)](#) (EHSDJCS) seeks to protect the countryside from inappropriate development. Policy CP20 (Landscape) of the [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#) seeks to protect the local distinctiveness of the countryside and conserve the natural beauty of the South Downs National Park. Policy CP29 (Design) of the [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#) requires high quality design. The proposed development complies with these policies, by reason of the existing use on-site as a MRF/WTS and the fact that the scale and massing of the proposed development is comparable to the existing buildings. Furthermore, policies 10 (Protecting health, safety and amenity) and 13 (High quality design of minerals and waste developments) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) relate to visual impact and design respectively and are met.
20. It should be noted that there are no restrictions on the hours of operation of the existing facility. The applicants have confirmed that at the present time the MRF/WTS is not used overnight. By the nature of the AD process staff will have to be present on-site 24/7. Overnight there will be a maximum of two staff on-site and the applicants have stated that there will be need for only minimal low-level lighting that will be controlled by movement sensors.

21. Policy 3 (Protection of habitats and species) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) as well as Policy CP21 (Biodiversity) of the [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#) seek to protect habitats and species and encourage biodiversity on-site. This has been achieved by the provision of additional planting.
22. It is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the conditions listed in **Appendix A** and the applicant entering into a S106 to secure restrictions to prevent HGV U turns on the A31 at Froyle.

### **The Site**

23. The site currently accommodates a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) and a Waste Transfer Station (WTS) which has been operational since 2005 through planning permission [F33619/004](#).
24. The MRF facility sorts 'dry' recyclable materials (such as paper, card, plastic bottles and cans) that are currently collected co-mingled from Hampshire's local authority kerbside recycling collections.
25. The existing site forms part of a network of waste facilities operated by Hampshire Waste Disposal Services Contract as part of the Hampshire Waste Management Contract. The existing MRF and WTS site has planning permission ([F33619/004](#)) to accept 125,000 tonnes of non-hazardous waste per annum. Alton MRF handles household recyclable waste with waste materials being delivered and exported by road from the site. The permission also includes 'ancillary depot uses'.
26. The existing MRF and WTS site occupies an area of 2.9 hectares within an area of land which is commercialised and industrialised. The site is a brownfield site.
27. The Site is in a largely rural part of East Hampshire and sits amongst a swathe of undulating countryside. The topography of the land immediately north of the Site is relatively flat, before transitioning into a rolling landscape, whereas to the south the land undulates toward the South Downs National Park. Electricity pylons are prominent in the surrounding landscape. The landscape of the surrounding area is defined by the valley of the River Wey (130m to the south of the site) and the surrounding undulating downland topography. This has resulted in a landform of ridges incised with steep-sided tributary valleys. The elevation of the Site is gently sloping, with a high point of approximate 100.9 above Ordnance Datum (AOD) at the entrance points on the northern boundary of the Site and a low point of 97 ADO along the south-east boundary. Agricultural fields lie to the north of the A31, to the

east of the site and to the south of the railway. **Appendix C - Site context plan** shows the site within the context of local features to include the South Downs National Park, the River Wey, The St Swithun's Way, local dwellings and heritage assets and Holybourne and Upper Froyle. Surrounding land cover is a mixture of fields enclosed by hedges and tree belts, and small woodlands.

28. The existing Site is largely defined by hedgerows and trees. There is an open area of amenity grassland within the Site, to the east of the main MRF building. This includes two small reedbed areas for waste management. Further hedges and tree belts often run alongside roads and public rights of way. The site aerial photograph (see **Appendix G – Aerial photo**) shows the existing site within the context of the immediate area revealing the extent of buildings and hardsurfacing on-site and the provision of mature landscaping, both within and outside the site on its northern boundary, and the area of open land within the eastern part of the site.
29. The site is located approximately 600 metres (m) east of the village of Holybourne and 2 kilometres (km) north-east of the town of Alton. The village of Upper Froyle is located approximately 1km to the north-east and includes a new housing development at Froyle Park. Outside of Holybourne and Alton, the surrounding land is predominantly agricultural, with the occasional farmhouse/ rural dwelling. Bonham's Farm is approximately 440m to the north-west from the application site's boundary (red line) and on the opposite side of the A31, Hawbridge Farm and Hawbridge Cottages are situated approximately 440m due south of the site with West End Lodge situated approximately 480m north-east of the site (see **Appendix C - Site context plan**).
30. The existing main building currently occupying the site is approximately 160m long and 45m wide and is approximately 15m in height. A separate amenity building is located to the north of the main MRF and WTS building, along with car parking for approximately 60 vehicles (see **Appendix D - Site Layout Plan**). The main building is surrounded by a concrete hardstanding and there is a weighbridge and associated office at the entrance.
31. Vehicular access and egress are achieved from the nearby westbound A31 dual carriageway via an existing slip road. The A31 is a strategic road as illustrated on the [Key Diagram of the HMWP \(2013\)](#) There are two site access and egress points from this slip road, both operating a left-in / left-out arrangement. One access leads to the car park and is used by light vehicles (employees and visitors), further along the slip road to the west is a separate access for Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs). The applicant has indicated that

on average, 128 two-way movements take place each day associated with the existing facility. There are no conditions relating to HGV vehicles numbers of the existing planning permissions for the MRF / WTS. There is an existing section 106 agreement attached to planning permission [F33619/004](#) in relation to highway contributions. This also prevents HGVs making U-turning movements on the A31 at Froyle (Hen and Chicken Inn junction) to access the site.

32. The boundary of the Site is formed by hedgerows and trees. There is an open area of amenity grassland within the Site to the east of the main building. This area also includes two small reedbeds used for the treatment of water arising from the MRF and WTS (see **Appendix D - Site Layout Plan**).
33. The Site is located approximately 1.2 kilometres (km) north-west from the northern boundary of South Downs National Park (SDNP) and 8.5km west from the western boundary of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). There are no statutory environmental nature designations within the application Site or immediately adjacent to the Site that are relevant to the development. There are four Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and two Special Protection Areas (SPA) but are no Ramsar Sites within the 10km search radius of the Site. There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or Local Nature Reserves (LNR) within 2km of the proposed facility although the Site lies within the Impact Risk Zone for two SSSI at Upper Greensand Hangers: Wyck to Wheatley and Bentley Station Meadow. Upper Greensand Hangers forms part of East Hampshire Hangers SAC. A number of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) are located within 2km of the Site. The location of these designations is set out in **Appendices B - Committee Plan** and **C - Site context plan**.
34. There are several designated heritage assets situated within a 1km radius of the application Site (see **Appendix C -Site context plan**). The nearest being the Grade II Listed 'Bonham's Milestone' situated approximately 380m due west of the Site on the northern side of the A31 and the Grade II\* Listed 'Bonham's Farmhouse' situated approximately 600m north-west of the Site. A cluster of Grade II Listed buildings, structure and features are situated between 680m and 1km due east of the Site, at and near to Fulling Mill (south of the A31). Other Grade II Listed Buildings situated at Turnpike Cottages are situated approximately 895m to 925m due north-east (north of the A31). The Cuckoo's Corner Roman site, Neatham' and 'Cuckoo's Corner Roman settlement, Neatham', both Scheduled Monuments, are situated approximately 750m due west/south-west of the Site.

35. The Site is situated within Flood Zone 1, the lowest risk zone, as designated by the Environment Agency. Whilst the Site is not situated within any groundwater 'source protection zones', the Site overlies a principal aquifer.
36. The River Wey is located 130m to the south of the site and which comprises Flood Risk Zone 3 (see **Appendix C - Site context plan**).
37. Surface water from the existing Site is managed via a series of drains and pipes which flow to a number of soakaway channels around the Site. This system is regulated under the site's existing Environmental Permit.
38. The Wey Valley is a corridor for a series of linear infrastructure, including the A31, a railway and pipelines. The Alton Branch railway line lies along the southern boundary of the Site. To its west, is the Holybourne Oil Terminal pumping station and beyond that an oil storage and rail terminal. Oil and gas pipelines run through these terminals and beneath the eastern edge of the existing MRF and WTS Site. The proposed Esso Southampton to London Pipeline route lies adjacent to the Site (see **Appendix C - Site context plan**).
39. There are no public rights of way (PRoW) on the Site. Froyle Footpath 15, which makes up part of the 'Saint Swithuns Way' long distance path, is located approximately 800m to the north-west of the development Site. Binsted Footpath 57 is located to the south-east, running between Binstead Road and Mill Court Lane which links to the 'Writers Way' (see **Appendix C - Site context plan**).
40. There are currently 95 staff employed at the existing MRF and WTS operations.
41. There are no existing planning conditions for the MRF or WTS relating to operating hours, although the Waste Disposal Authority has confirmed that Veolia work to the hours required to deliver waste collection/transfer contractual obligations.

## Planning History

42. The planning history of the site is as follows:

<b>Application No</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Date Issued</b>
<a href="#">33619/007</a>	Materials Recovery Facility, waste transfer station and ancillary depot	Refused	09/03/22

	uses		
<a href="#">33619/005</a>	Operation of food waste compactor unit, including construction of a food waste compactor pit and access ramps	Granted	17/01/12
<a href="#">F33619/004</a>	Redevelopment of site to form materials recycling facility, waste transfer station and ancillary depot uses	Granted	02/04/03

43. The site is occupied by the current existing MRF and WTS, which is permitted to process up to 125,000 tonnes of waste per annum. The existing waste site is safeguarded through Policy 26 (Safeguarding – waste infrastructure) of the [Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan \(2013\) \(HMWP\)](#) as a municipal solid waste MRF and WTS. The MRF and WTS Site is operated by the applicant as part of the Project Integra waste partnership. Project Integra is the waste management partnership which was formed between Hampshire County Council, the two unitary authorities of Southampton and Portsmouth, the 11 District Councils within Hampshire, and Hampshire Waste Services (now known as Veolia - Disposal Services Contract. This partnership was created in 1995.
44. As already indicated, prior to the site’s use as a MRF and WTS, the site was occupied for non-waste management uses. These non-waste applications on the site were granted by East Hampshire District Council. Prior to the development of the MRF and WTS, the site was occupied by Gibbs-Palmer as a depot for packing, storage and distribution purposes for the garden centre industry. Prior to Gibbs-Palmer using the site, it is understood that the site was used as a Ministry of Works Army Cold Store in the 1930’s and for several decades during the last century. Due to the passage of time since these were granted, and the fact that the site has been redeveloped as a MRF and WTS, these are not included in the above table.
45. Previous planning consents have not placed restrictions on the hours of operation in respect of the use of the site.

## **The Proposal**

46. All documents associated with the planning application can be found on the planning application [webpage](#).
47. The proposed development would comprise a 20,000 tonnes per annum (tpa) WTS (i.e. a reconfiguration of the existing WTS on-site) and a new 50,000 tpa AD facility.
48. The proposals seek to replace the on-site MRF to provide an Anaerobic Digester (AD). The on-site WTS will be retained. The works comprise the demolition of part of existing building and the provision of the following:

- Waste reception, pre-treatment and odour abatement facility;
  - Pasteurisation plant;
  - Anaerobic digestion and buffering tanks;
  - Gas treatment facility (also referred to as the Gas to Grid facility);
  - Combined Heat and Power Units; and
  - Emergency Flare.
49. The existing eastern end of the MRF and WTS building would be partially demolished to enable the construction of the AD tank area. The remaining building would be re-purposed to provide a WTS and the AD waste reception and processing activities. Gas treatment, CHP engines, flare and a digestate tank would be located to the north of the site. Other elements of the existing infrastructure that would be retained and repurposed include:
- Weighbridges and Weighbridge Office;
  - Administration and Welfare Building;
  - Internal roads, hardstanding's, and car parks;
  - Fire tank and pumps;
  - Drainage and services; and
  - Landscaping.

*Design and layout:*

50. The majority of the works are to be provided largely within the footprint of the existing building. These include four digestive tanks and the buffer tanks and are to be provided in what is known as the southern bund. A fifth digestive tank and the emergency flare is proposed to the immediate north of the existing building, within the existing facility on an area currently provided as hardsurfacing (in what is known as the northern bund).
51. The proposed site layout plan (see **Appendix D** - Site Layout Plan) shows the location of the proposed AD facility in relation to the retained, existing, building to include two bunded areas. The southern bund contains three fermentation tanks, a digestate tank, three buffer tanks and an odour stack and is largely contained within the site of the existing building. The northern bund contains a single digestate tank. There is a culverted bund link connecting the northern and southern bunds. To the west of the north bund are two Combined Heat and Power (CHP) engines.
52. The existing building is a maximum of 15.2m in height above ground level. The replacement AD tanks will be 12.97m above ground level and all the same size. The overall height of the proposed development will therefore be 2.23m lower than the maximum height of the existing building.
53. The proposed elevations (see **Appendix E – Proposed elevations**) shows the height scale and massing of the tanks and associated structures. These

elevations show the odour stack (in the southern bund) which is 3m higher than the retained building and the flare (to the west of the northern bund). The existing elevations are set out in **Appendix F– Existing elevations** as a comparison. Given that the proposals comprise only partial demolition of the existing building a clear comparison can be drawn between the proposed structures and the retained building. All structures will be lower than the existing building to be demolished with the exception of odour abatement stack. This will be 19m in height and thus +3.8m higher than the retained building so as to allow for maximum odour dispersal.

54. Both bunds will be sunk into the ground by 1m and surrounded by a 1.8m high wall. Both bunds are to be connected by a culverted bund link. All five tanks are the same size and have a capacity of 2,712m<sup>3</sup> (i.e. 13,560m<sup>3</sup> overall). In addition, there are three buffer tanks which have a combined capacity of 1,506m<sup>3</sup> - as such the total liquid that is potentially stored in all the tanks is 15,066m<sup>3</sup>. The capacity of the overall bunded area is 6,252m<sup>3</sup> which is approximately 41% of the overall capacity of the tanks.
55. The submitted plans show doors on the bund perimeter wall which will be used to provide access into the bunded areas for maintenance and consumable deliveries. These doors would be designed to provide full containment i.e. have impermeable seals, and would only be opened under supervision during specific deliveries and maintenance works. As such, they would not be frequently used. They would be kept closed during operations and there would be specific management operating procedures for the plant to specifically detail how they would be used and managed to maintain the necessary environmental protection to comply with Environmental Permit requirements.

*Waste source:*

56. The AD facility would be fuelled with food and other organic waste arriving via direct delivery and bulked from Transfer Stations (TS's) from within Hampshire. The submitted **Transport Assessment** confirms that source of the organic waste will be from Transfer Stations within Hampshire. However, it should be noted that the applicant is a commercial operator and may well accept waste materials from outside Hampshire
57. Supplementary third party bulked organics and/or liquid would also be delivered to the site.

*Digestate:*

58. A by-product of the AD process is that of digestate. This will be stored for a temporary basis within one of two digestate storage tanks before being removed by tanker for direct application to land (during the permitted spreading periods), storage at a farm before being spread to land or taken to a facility for further processing to provide fertiliser/compost. There is no reference in the submitted documents to a need for open storage of

digestates. Previous consents have ensured no open storage of waste on site.

*Odour:*

59. The odour abatement system will maintain the buildings under a negative pressure which will draw air from outside the buildings thus preventing the egress of potential smells. An induced draft fan will ensure that there are three changes of air from within the AD reception and process buildings per hour. The extracted air will then be filtered through ultra-violet light and activated carbon system (or equivalent). This process will remove the majority of odours from the air. The filtered air is then released to the atmosphere via the odour control system.

*Energy:*

60. Two CHP units are proposed. They will be 5m in height and include independent emission stacks of 15.2m in height (i.e. the same height as the main building) so as to ensure adequate emission dispersion.
61. The proposed development also involves the export of biogas into the local gas distribution network. As such a below ground pipe connecting the AD Facility to the local gas main (which crosses the eastern section of the Site) would be constructed, along with a kiosk containing apparatus for connection into the gas main.
62. Two CPH engines are proposed, one of which will use biogas to generate electricity to be used on-site to provide heat, to maintain optimum operating temperatures and power for the AD process. Should, for short term technical reasons, it not be possible to inject biomethane into the gas grid, then the CPH engines will generate electricity for the local network.
63. In the event that there is excess biomethane (i.e. that cannot be exported to the gas network, used to generate electricity on-site or exported to the local network) then this will burnt-off so as to prevent the over pressurisation of the gas system. The emergency gas flare is some 8.2m high and located within the northern portion of the site and to the immediate east of the fifth AD tank.
64. Should, for short term technical reasons, it not be possible to inject biomethane into the gas grid, then the CPH engines will generate electricity for the local network. The reason for the provision of two CPH is to provide a backup should one fail.
65. The emergency flare is to be enclosed thereby containing the naked flame and it will not be visible. However, the submitted Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (at para 5.1.2) confirms that the 'occasional presence of the emergency flare may result in some very limited additional glow from the top of the enclosed flare stack at times at night'.

66. In the further scenario where it is not possible to export bio-gas, neither CPH engines are not working and it is not possible to use the emergency flare then gas will be released into to the atmosphere. However, the **Air Quality Report** (para 7.1.1.3) states that '*emissions from these sources are only expected to occur under exceptional emergency situations, and therefore will be extremely unlikely and short-term events*'. The report also confirms that in such a scenario that odours will be effectively dispersed.

*Landscaping and ecology:*

67. The application is supported by a **Landscaping Scheme** which sets out how additional landscaping is to be provided on site. The landscaping scheme provides for additional planting of 3 oak trees and shrub planting on the southern boundary. The opportunity for additional on-site is limited due to the size of the site and the applicants have stated that there is no opportunity for off-site landscaping to mitigate impact. The applicant also points out that the site is well established, the proposals do not seek to increase scale and massing on-site and that the site is already well screened, not least due to existing off-site vegetation.
68. In addition, a **Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)** has been submitted, which seeks to set out how the proposals, when compared to the existing buildings on site will impact on the character of the wider area. The LVIA concludes that relative impact of the proposed development on the wider area is acceptable.
69. The proposals seek to use the colour green as the external material.
70. The application is also supported by an **Ecological Assessment and biodiversity metric**. The application seeks to meet Biodiversity Net Gain objectives by providing 3 small oak trees on-site. This will provide a 7% net gain on-site.
71. The site is a well-established site and fencing and site security provision will be unchanged.

*Hours of working and operations:*

72. As previously noted, there are no existing planning conditions for the MRF or WTS relating to operating hours, although the Waste Disposal Authority has confirmed that the applicant work's to the hours required to deliver waste collection/transfer contractual obligations.
73. The AD process is a continual one and as such will be operational 24 hours a day and for seven days a week. Overnight there will be two members of staff on-site and 4 staff for weekend shifts.

74. The WTS would operate on Monday to Friday from 0700-1900, on Saturday 08.00-16.00 and Sunday 0900-1600.
75. Deliveries of waste to the AD and WTS facilities will be consistent with the operation of the WTS, i.e. Monday to Friday from 0700-1900, on Saturday 08.00-16.00 and Sunday 0900-1600.
76. The current staffing levels on-site are some 95 employees with a maximum of 50 staff on-site at any one time. The proposed development will only require 16 staff, with a maximum of 6 staff on-site at any one time. There will therefore be a significant reduction in staff vehicular movements compared to current use.

*Lighting:*

77. Once commissioned the AD facility would operate on a continuous basis and at certain times of the year the WTS would operate during hours of darkness / low light. As such during hours of darkness there would be a need for lighting commensurate with Health and Safety requirements to ensure a safe working environment for operatives on site.
78. New light sources would typically be LED, or other high efficiency sources. This would maximise both energy efficiency and longevity. Luminaires would be chosen in order to prevent light output above the horizontal, minimising light pollution. All non-essential external lighting would be turned off during hours of darkness outside normal working hours. Lighting would be controlled via a timer system with photocell override (e.g. timer could be overridden if sufficient ambient light is available).

*Highways and access:*

79. The site is on the [Strategic Road Network](#) as defined by the [HMWP \(2013\)](#). Access to the site is currently via a slip road from the A31, there are two site accesses taken from this slip road, both operating a left-in / left-out arrangement; one access leads to the car park and is used by light vehicles, further along the slip road to the west is a separate access for HGVs. No changes to the access are proposed.
80. Access arrangements will be unchanged and all traffic, to include HGV traffic, will continue to use the A31 to both access and exit the site. The application is supported by a Transport Assessment (TA) which states that vehicular movements, to include HGV movements, will be reduced as a result of the proposal.

81. With regard to HGV movements the **TA** states that for the period 2016-2019 there were an average of 126 two-way HGV trips per day associated with the existing MRF/WTS. The proposed development anticipates some 113 two-way HGV movements per day (i.e. a reduction of 13 two-way HGV movements per day).
82. The current MRF/WTS use has a maximum of 50 staff on site at any one time – with an average of 0.5 visitors per day there are therefore some 101 non-HGV vehicular movements per day. The proposed use will have 12 members of staff on site per day and on average 0.5 visitors per day giving rise to an additional 25 daily two-way car / light vehicle trips (a reduction of 76 movements per day).
83. The proposed combined AD facility and WTS will therefore generate a maximum combined daily total of 138 two-way Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) and light vehicle movements (69 in and 69 out). This will mean a reduction 88 two-way trips resulting from the proposed development compared to the existing MRF / WTS. This comprises a reduction of 12 two-way HGV trips and 76 daily two-way Staff / Visitor movements.
84. A Section 106 (s106) legal agreement attached to the current permission prevents HGVs accessing the site from making U-turns on the A31 at Froyle. It is proposed that the arrangements in the existing s106 agreement would be implemented through a legal agreement if planning permission is granted.

*Construction:*

85. The construction period is anticipated to take approximately 18 months with the timing dependent on the construction and commissioning of the new MRF at Chickenhall Lane. Construction will be during the hours of 7am to 7pm, Mondays to Saturdays.
86. The applicant proposes that a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) with an HGV routeing strategy is required to be submitted to and agreed with the Waste Planning Authority prior to construction via a condition.
87. The proposed development comprises partial redevelopment of an existing facility with the new development largely contained within the footprint of the existing facility.
88. The applicant also proposes that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will submitted to and approved by the Waste Planning Authority prior to implementation of the consent via a planning condition. The CEMP will require the applicant to address the potential for harm that may well arise as a result of the construction process to include impact on neighbouring residential amenities such as noise and dust, potential pollution

to the local river network, to minimise potential light pollution and to protect local biodiversity.

*Employment:*

89. There are currently 95 employees on-site. It is anticipated that the new combined WTS / AD Plant will employ a total of 16 staff with 2 at the WTS and the remaining 14 working shifts at the AD (with a maximum of 4 per shift). It is also anticipated that there would be an average of 0.5 visitors per day.

*Other operational matters:*

90. Issues of potential harm through litter and pest/vermin control are relevant to the application not least as organic waste will be delivered to the site and rejected waste and digestates are to be exported. Conditions are recommended that seek to ensure that issues in this regard are both minimised and mitigated. These matters are also addressed under the site Environmental Permit.

## **Environmental Impact Assessment**

91. The proposed development has been assessed under [Town & Country Planning \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations 2017](#). The proposed development is not an EIA development under the Regulations due to the scale and nature of the development and the existing waste infrastructure in place.

## **Development Plan and Guidance**

92. Section 38(6) of the [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#) requires that applications are determined in accordance with the statutory 'development plan' unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore, consideration of the relevant plans, guidance and policies and whether the proposal is in accordance with these is of relevance to decision making.
93. The key policies in the development plan which are material to the determination of the application, are summarised below. In addition, reference is made to relevant national planning policy and other policies that guide the decision-making process and which are material to the determination of the application.
94. For the purposes of this application, the statutory development plan comprises the following.

[Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan \(2013\)](#) (HMWP)

95. The following policies are of the relevance to the proposal:

- Policy 1: Sustainable minerals and waste development;
- Policy 2: Climate change - mitigation and adaptation;
- Policy 3: Protection of habitats and species;
- Policy 4: Protection of the designated landscape;
- Policy 5: Protection of the countryside;
- Policy 7: Conserving the historic environment and heritage assets;
- Policy 10: Protecting public health, safety and amenity;
- Policy 11: Flood risk and prevention;
- Policy 12: Managing traffic;
- Policy 13: High-quality design of minerals and waste development;
- Policy 14: Community benefits;
- Policy 16: Safeguarding - minerals infrastructure;
- Policy 25: Sustainable waste management;
- Policy 26: Safeguarding - waste infrastructure;
- Policy 27: Capacity for waste management development;
- Policy 28: Energy recovery development; and
- Policy 29: Locations and sites for waste management.

#### **Update to the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan (emerging)**

96. Hampshire County Council and its partner Authorities (Southampton City Council, Portsmouth City Council, New Forest National Park Authority and South Downs National Park Authority) are working to produce a partial update to the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan (2013) which will guide minerals and waste decision making in the Plan Area up until 2040. The partial update to the Plan will build upon the adopted Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan (2013), eventually providing new and updated policies based on up-to-date evidence of the current levels of provision for minerals and waste facilities in the Plan Area. Plan making is currently at the [Regulation 18 draft plan consultation stage](#). The update to the Plan and its associated policies are only emerging policy. This means that the policies cannot be given weight on decision making at this stage.

97. The following emerging policies are of the relevance to the proposal:

- Policy 1: Sustainable minerals and waste development;
- Policy 2: Climate change - mitigation and adaptation;
- Policy 3: Protection of habitats and species;
- Policy 4: Protection of the designated landscape;
- Policy 5: Protection of the countryside;
- Policy 7: Conserving the historic environment and heritage assets;
- Policy 8: Water resources;
- Policy 9: Protection of soils;
- Policy 10: Restoration of minerals and waste developments;
- Policy 11: Protecting public health, safety, amenity and well-being;

- Policy 12: Flood risk and prevention;
- Policy 13: Managing traffic;
- Policy 14: High-quality design of minerals and waste development;
- Policy 25: Sustainable waste management;
- Policy 26: Safeguarding - waste infrastructure;
- Policy 27: Capacity for waste management development;
- Policy 28: Energy recovery development; and
- Policy 29: Locations and sites for waste management.

**East Hampshire and South Downs Joint Core Strategy Part 1 (2014)**

(EHSDJCS (2014))

98. The following policies are relevant to the proposal:

- CP1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development;
- CP4 – Existing Employment Land;
- CP19 - Development in the countryside;
- CP20 – Landscape;
- CP21 – Biodiversity;
- CP24 – Sustainable construction;
- CP25 – Flood risk;
- CP26 – Water resources/water quality;
- CP27 – Pollution;
- CP28 – Green Infrastructure;
- CP29 – Design;
- CP30 – Historic Environment; and
- CP31 – Transport.

99. Please note that EHDC is in the process of consultation with respect to their emerging local plan – Reg 18, part 1. This is available to view at the following location: [EHDC Reg 18](#).

**South Downs National Park Dark Skies Technical Advice Note Version 2**

100. The site is located 1.2km from the South Downs National Park. The whole of the national park is a designated International Dark Sky Reserve and potential impact in this regard is a material planning consideration.

101. Other policies and guidance of relevance to the proposal include the following:

**National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (NPPF)**

102. The following paragraphs are relevant to this proposal:

- Paragraphs 10-12: Presumption in favour of sustainable development;
- Paragraphs 38, 47: Decision making;

- Paragraphs 55 – 56: Planning conditions;
- Paragraphs 57: Planning obligations;
- Paragraphs 81: Support of sustainable economic growth;
- Paragraphs 84-85: Rural economy;
- Paragraph 92: Healthy, inclusive and safe places;
- Paragraph 100: Public rights of way and access;
- Paragraphs 104, 110-113: Sustainable transport;
- Paragraph 120: Types of land;
- Paragraphs 126-136: Design;
- Paragraphs 153-158; Planning and climate change;
- Paragraphs 174, 176-178: Contributions and enhancement of natural and local environment;
- Paragraphs 180-181: Biodiversity and planning;
- Paragraphs 183-188: Ground conditions and pollution;
- Paragraphs 194-208: Heritage assets.

### **National Planning Policy for Waste (2014) (NPPW)**

103. The following paragraphs are relevant to the proposal:

- Paragraph 1: Delivery of sustainable development and resource efficiency; and
- Paragraph 7: Determining planning applications.

### **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)**

104. The following paragraphs are relevant to the proposal:

- Paragraphs 005, 006 and 008: Air quality (November 2019);
- Paragraphs 002, 003 and 004: Appropriate assessment (July 2019);
- Paragraphs 001, 002, 004, 009: Climate change (March 2019);
- Paragraphs 001, 009, 012, 016: Design (October 2019);
- Paragraphs 001-024: Determining a planning application (June 2021);
- Paragraphs 001-007: Effective use of land (July 2019);
- Paragraph 001: Hazardous substances (December 2012);
- Paragraphs 001-012: Healthy and safe communities (August 2022);
- Paragraphs 001-002, 006-064: Historic Environment (July 2019);
- Paragraphs 001-007: Light pollution (November 2019);
- Paragraphs 001-043: Natural environment (July 2019);
- Paragraphs 001-017: Noise (July 2019);
- Paragraph 001-015: Travel plans, transport assessments and statements (March 2014);
- Paragraphs 001, 010, 011, 012, 013: Renewable and low carbon energy (June 2015);
- Paragraphs 001-030: Use of planning conditions (July 2019); and
- Paragraphs 001-0055: Waste (October 2015);

### **Planning Practice Guidance for Waste (15 October 2015) (Live) (PPGW)**

105. The following are paragraphs relevant to the proposal:

- Paragraph 001 - Who is the planning authority for waste development?;
- Paragraph 002 - What matters come within the scope of 'waste development'?
- Paragraphs 008 and 009 - Who contributes to moving waste up the Waste Hierarchy;
- Paragraph 045 - How are counties and districts expected to work together in respect of waste development planning applications;
- Paragraph 047 - Should existing waste facilities be expanded/extended?;
- Paragraph 050 - What is the relationship between planning and other regulatory regimes;
- Paragraph: 051 - What is the main role of the environmental permit?

#### Waste Management Plan for England (2021) (WMPE)

106. The following are sections are relevant to the proposal:

- The Waste Management Plan and the objectives of the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011;
- Waste management in England;
- Waste hierarchy; and
- Waste arisings.

### **Consultations**

107. The following responses have been received from consultees. A summary is provided below. A full record of all consultation responses is available to view on the planning application webpages under 'consultee responses' <https://planning.hants.gov.uk/Planning/Display/HCC/2023/0057>.

108. **County Councillor Kemp-Gee:** Raised concerns and made the following comments:

- Current landscaping is totally inadequate and screening on the southern and eastern aspects must be greatly improved to mitigate the appearance from the SDNP. Everything should have green/camouflage paint.
- The application has under-estimated the digestate movement requirements.
- Strict conditions should be enforced on HGV traffic not using the B3006 through Selborne.
- Mitigation should also be sought with regard to the use of Mill Lane, Alton, as traffic approaches the site from the B3004. Veolia must instigate regular litter picks on the A31 as a condition.
- Strict conditioning is required with regard to lighting, noise, smell and gas flaring.
- No digestate should be stored in the open air on the site as on-site storage facilities for digestate are inadequate. Absolutely no food crops should be used in the AD.
- There should be a strong and representative Liaison Panel financed by the applicant.

- Concerns have been raised by local residents with regard to the possibility of ground water contamination in the Upper Wey Valley. Any successful application should ensure that the Environment Agency and County Council Mineral and Waste Officers to take every care with regard to this issue.

**109. East Hampshire District Council:** Raised concerns as follows:

- Any development proposals, in this countryside location, have to be fully justified and the likely impacts assessed sensitively. The need for the AD should be established.
- The proposed green tanks would introduce a rather incongruous and alien set of features in the landscape. A non-reflective grey or brown might be more appropriate providing a more subdued impact - particularly important with regard to the tank in close proximity to the A31.
- The combination of the buildings and structures would have more of an impact locally than the one building currently on the site and highly noticeable from local rights of way.
- Mitigation in the form of a robust native planting scheme is required.
- Impact of light pollution on the South Downs National Park should be considered.
- Adequate ecology surveys should be undertaken, nitrate neutrality met and BNG provided.
- Organic waste may well be delivered from outside the county.
- A current S106 restriction on U-turns on the A31 by HGV vehicles is being ignored thereby harming highway safety.
- Concerns are raised with regard to groundwater vulnerability.
- Conditions in respect of odours and emissions, external lighting, hours of use, hours of delivery, and a Construction Environmental Management Plan are required.

110. **East Hampshire District Council Environmental Health Officer (EHO):** Was notified. However, no response has been received despite numerous officer chases. Any update will be reported to committee via an update report.

111. **Environment Agency:** No objection subject to conditions relating to drainage systems, remediation and verification.

112. **East Hampshire District Council Conservation Officer:** Was notified.

113. **County Archaeologist (Hampshire County Council):** No archaeology issues raised.

114. **County Arboricultural Officer (Hampshire County Council):** No objections raised, subject to a tree protection condition.

**115. Bentley Parish Council:** Object to the proposal on the following grounds:

- Concerns over contamination from the AD facility to local groundwater sources and the River Wey.
- There appears to only be a limited source of food waste and will have to rely on other material to make the AD economically viable. This seems counter productive and will lead to increased vehicular movements.
- There is unproven need for the facility.
- Concerns are raised with regard to air quality and nuisance as a result in smells and odours.
- Further information is required in respect of storage and use of the digestate.
- Potential harm to the wider area in respect of light pollution and impact on the South Downs National Park policy in respect of dark skies.

**116. Froyle Parish Council:** Object to the proposal on the following grounds:

- Is there is already sufficient AD capacity planned in Hampshire to handle the kerbside collections? Will this AD be predominantly if not solely for the benefit of Hampshire? Will it be used to import other waste as feedstock from further afield with resulting implications for traffic etc? Kerbside collections have yet to be introduced so their success or otherwise cannot be determined. As such, additional AD capacity may not be required. Will the source of such waste be monitored as we are not in favour of prime agricultural land being used for cultivating plants solely to be used as feedstock in an AD?
- If there is no demonstrable need for the facility then why should the development be approved given the potential disadvantages that will result in respect of odour, light pollution, airborne emissions, groundwater contamination, pollution to the River Wey and increased HGV traffic.
- The majority of food waste should come from Hampshire and purpose grown crops should be excluded from use within the AD process.
- The reuse of the site and ensuring that the proposed buildings are no higher than the existing buildings (with the exception of the odour stack) is welcomed. However there is inadequate screening and it is noted that the required screening for the MRF was never implemented.
- It is unclear how the odour control process works. There should be no external storage of feedstock and digestates.
- A visit to a similar facility should be arranged.
- The bunds should be designed to accommodate the full capacity of the full content of all the tanks. Any spillage should no be allowed to enter local groundwater.
- The use of the emergency flare should be carefully monitored. Will controls be placed on the frequency of use of the emergency flare?
- Other AD facilities create issues of odour to neighbouring residents. Concerns are raised with regard to the effectiveness of odour dispersal over a 500m radius. Wil this be monitored?
- Information is required in respect of vermin control. Concerns are raised with regard to both the potential impact of rodents on the local ecosystem and overcontrol through the overuse of poison.

- The proposal is to be operated 24/7 and concerns are raised over the impact on the South Downs National Park International Dark Skies Reserve. What light emissions will be set and how will they be monitored.
  - There is no electricity point to connect to and thus the facility will be unable to export electricity to the National Grid.
  - Where will digestate be stored?
  - How will carbon dioxide be processed and disposed of?
  - Consultation should be undertaken with regard to the S106 agreement, in respect of litter collection on the A31 verge; no external storage of feedstock/digestates; mitigation planting; traffic routing; cycle routes/access; compensation to the Local Authority in respect of the loss of employment and biodiversity net gain.
117. **Binstead Parish Council:** Object to the proposal on the following grounds:
- Concerns raised over the potential for ground water contamination to the River Wey as a result of the rupture of the AD tanks. Conditions should be placed on any consent with regard to the construction and maintenance of the bunds to ensure no seepage into the groundwater.
  - There is unproven need for the AD capacity. Any facility should be for the benefit of Hampshire, not least to local capacity issues on the A31. The applicants should not have to rely on local agricultural slurry or be able to encourage the use of prime agricultural land to grow plants solely as feedstock for the AD.
  - The site is not in an ideal location for an AD plant and there is no obvious local heat demand.
  - There is no connection from the site to the national grid – which is two miles away.
  - The proposed screening will not mitigate visual impact.
  - Concerns are raised with regard to what emissions would be vented from the stack, how would flaring be controlled and managed. Flaring should be minimal and used as an exception rather than on a regular basis. Criteria should be applied as to when it is lit. Proper control and setting of all emissions must be guaranteed to include the installation of scrubbers and setting of limits for each element.
  - Many other ADs create odours and information should be provided with regard to the design of the facility and its odour control system and external storage of feedstock and digestates. Concerns are raised over the claim that odours will be dispersed over a distance of 500m.
  - A site visit to another, similar, AD facility is requested to understand the effectiveness of the proposed controls.
  - Information with regard to vermin control is requested.
  - Concerns are raised with regard to potential harm to the night sky – the site is in close location to the South Downs National Park International Dark Sky Reserve. The facility is to be operational 24/7 and the dark sky should be protected.
  - There should be no open air storage of digestates or foodstock.
  - Information should be provide in respect of the processing and removal from the site of carbon dioxide.

- A S106 should be secured in respect of the running of a liaison panel; fortnightly collection of refuse from the A31 verges; additional mitigation planting to both the A31 and the railway line side of the application site – which should have been provided as part of the MRF application; a segregated cycle lane, biodiversity net gain provision, off-site if required; traffic routing; no external storage of foodstock or digestates and; compensation to the local authority in respect of job losses.
- 118. Selborne Parish Council:** Object to the proposal on the following grounds:
- No clear evidence of need has been provided and no identification of the specific areas the waste will come from. As such it is impossible to understand how the projected figure of 70,000 tonnes have come from. There has been no review of existing or proposed AD sites and to move food waste considerable distances adds to climate change and defeats biogas benefits of the scheme. There are already AD's at Herriard and Farleigh and questions are raised over the need for an additional site so close to those existing.
  - The traffic report does not identify where waste may originate and traffic may therefore come via local areas. Selborne already has considerable local traffic issues. Any HGVs and smaller lorries, carrying food waste and associated odours, should not travel through local villages.
  - There is potential for ground water pollution – the proximity of food waste to the River Wey and the local water table must have great risks.
  - Additional lighting over and above what has been already authorised should be resisted so as to protect the Dark Night Skies area.
- 119. Alton Town Council:** No objection.
- 120. Natural England:** No objection subject to the following:
- the planning authority undertaking an appropriate Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to ensure that mitigation is secured to ensure that the proposals would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Solent designated sites, including the Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA).
  - Conditions relating to the submission of a full Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and information on adherence to the permitted source feedstock types.
- 121. Defence Infrastructure Organisation:** No safeguarding objections raised.
- 122. Network Rail:** Due to the close proximity of the proposed development to Network Rail's land and the operational railway, Network Rail has requested that the applicant engages Network Rail's Asset Protection and Optimisation (ASPRO) team prior to works commencing.
- 123. Farnborough Airport:** No objection.
- 124. Environment Agency:** No objection subject to conditions in respect of any propose drainage system, contamination and any required remediation.

125. **South Downs National Park Authority:** Raised concerns as follows:

- Potential for light pollution in respect of the scheme, echoing concerns also raised by the County Council Landscape Officer. LVIA paragraph 5.1.2 outlines that the night time effects from new lighting would not materially change the existing extent of light pollution. This position is a missed opportunity to improve upon reducing light pollution to benefit the landscape and should also be considered as part of the assessment of impacts upon the setting of the National Park - which is an International Dark Night Skies Reserve.
- The proposed cladding of the building and reducing the prominence of the proposed building within the landscape, particularly in views towards the site including from the National Park.
- Mitigation planting is required to help to filter/mitigate visual impact in views from the edge of the National Park - as seen in viewpoints 4 and 5 in the LVIA. More detailed consideration of species and planting methods for example could potentially be conditioned. Native planting consistent with local landscape character is recommended.
- On the basis of the above, the Authority considers that the proposals could result in a minor adverse impact upon the setting of the National Park. However, if the Landscape Officer's advice is addressed to their satisfaction and a lighting scheme which overall reduces light pollution is proposed then the Authority raise no objection.

126. **Surrey County Council:** Provided the following comments:

- In general the application is supported. The site comprises previously developed land and benefits from existing waste management infrastructure with good access to the A3. The proposed development would include two combined heat and power engines which would generate renewable electricity and heat as by-products of the AD facility. These would be used to power operations on the application site, and excess electricity may also be exported to the grid thereby making a contribution to decarbonising energy infrastructure. These measures are welcomed in the context of a changing climate and the need to mitigate and adapt to the same.
- In the interests of the Waste Hierarchy, a construction waste management plan as part of the CEMP would be welcomed. In this regard Hampshire County Council should satisfy itself that CD&E waste generated as a result of the development is limited to the minimum quantity necessary and that opportunities for re-use and recycling of any CD&E waste that does arise are maximised.

127. **Historic England:** Was notified.

128. **Local Highway Authority:** Following a review of the information contained in the application the LHA is satisfied that the proposal will not represent a material impact on the safety or capacity of the A31. No objection is

therefore raised subject to conditions in respect of a Construction Traffic Management Plan and the routing of HGV's – to be supported by a S106 agreement.

129. **Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA):** groundwater monitoring and more extensive infiltration testing to be able to confirm that the proposed drainage will meet the required standard. Given the changes proposed, the information provided and given that groundwater monitoring season has passed, this can be addressed by condition.
130. **Landscape Planning and Heritage (Landscape) (Hampshire County Council):** Following the submission of additional information in respect of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and the landscape plan no objection is raised.
131. **Landscape Planning and Heritage (Archaeology) (Hampshire County Council):** No objection.
132. **Countryside Planning Officer (Hampshire County Council):** No objection has been raised to the application. However, a number of informative's are suggested to protect local rights of way.
133. **County Ecologist (Hampshire County Council):** Initial concerns with regard to lack of survey data have been addressed to the satisfaction of the County Ecologist. The applicant confirmed that there was insufficient water in the reedbeds to undertake an eDNA great crested newt survey, further information with regard to the extent of habitat impact on reptiles and clarifying a mitigation strategy. Information has also been provided in relation to the extent of pruning and scrub clearance along with the extent of native scrub planting on site to minimise impacts and enhance habitat suitability for dormice on site on site to minimise impacts and enhance habitat suitability for dormice on site. All these measures are considered to be satisfactory.

The application includes a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan, which confirms the planting of 3 oak trees on site. This is acceptable subject to a condition is added to the decision notice to ensure the measures detailed in the submitted Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (Kevin Barry, June 2023) are adhered to and fully implemented. Furthermore, a CEMP is also secured via a pre-commencement planning condition.

134. **Public Health (Hampshire County Council):** Was notified.
135. **NATS Safeguarding:** No objection.

## Representations

136. Hampshire County Council's [Statement of Community Involvement \(2017\)](#) (SCI) sets out the adopted consultation and publicity procedures associated with determining planning applications. In complying with the requirements of the SCI, Hampshire County Council:
- Published a notice of the application in the [Hampshire Independent](#);
  - Placed notices of the application at the application site and local area;
  - Consulted all statutory and non-statutory consultees in accordance with [The Town and Country Planning \(Development Management Procedure\) \(England\) Order 2015](#); and
  - Notified by letter all residential properties within 500-800 metres of the boundary of the site over and above the requirements of the SCI.
137. Following the initial round of public consultation, the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority concluded that further information was required for the purposes of determining the application. The request for further information is summarised as follows:
1. Requirement to respond to comments from the Local Lead Flood Authority
  2. A rebuttal statement in respect of ecology requirements
  3. Additional landscape information to include cross sections, confirmation of the colour of external materials and a landscaping scheme.
  4. Additional information in respect of consultee responses to include the catchment area from which organic waste is to be received, digestate storage management, onward distribution, use of the local road network, litter and odour management, the provision of lighting and the possibility of providing additional off-site landscaping.
138. The information was submitted by the applicant on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023 and subject to a consultation between 14<sup>th</sup> July – 28<sup>th</sup> July 2023 in accordance with the adopted SCI.
139. As of 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2023, objections to the proposal have been received from 35 local residents as well as from Alton Climate Change and Alton Natural History Society.
140. The main areas of concern raised in the objections related to the following areas:
- impact on wildlife, failure to undertake appropriate ecology surveys and lack of biodiversity net gain;
  - impact of the site and its activities on the rural location;
  - impact on nearby countryside;
  - design, scale and massing of proposed structures and concerns over the impact on the wider area and to the landscape character of the wider area;
  - lack of landscaping and screening, both with regard to the proposed development but also with the disregard to screen the current facility;

- the presence of an emergency flare stack and the implications of its use and frequency of use.
- impact of lighting associated with the development especially at night to include harm to the South Downs National Park, which is designated as an International Dark Sky Reserve;
- proximity to residential properties;
- Impact on the amenity of the village and local residents;
- noise impacts;
- impact on air quality;
- associated health impacts;
- odour associated with the development, both in respect of the AD process and due to the presence of food waste on-site;
- pollution and emissions associated with the development to include potential harm to local chalk streams;
- increase in traffic to the local network:
- surrounding highways/local roads not suitable for additional HGV movements;
- the development is out of character in the rural area and should be located in a more suitable area closer to areas of higher population;
- lack of demonstrated need for the development in Hampshire to include concerns over the failure to currently have kerbside collection of food waste in Hampshire and the likely requirement to bring such food waste from outside Hampshire;
- concerns that crops will be grown specifically for the AD process rather than food waste;
- lack of public consultation;
- impact of the external storage of foodstock;
- litter problems, particularly on the A31.
- loss of employment to include concerns that the proposal will result in a reduction of staff on-site from 95 to 16 and associated impact on the local economy;
- lack of consideration of other / alternatives sites and locations for the development;
- implications of the short term nature of the development – a 25 year life is anticipated;
- lack of information submitted as part of the planning application;
- safety concerns with regard to the AD process; and
- continued failure of other AD's in the UK to adequately protect waterways pollution to include from the storage and use of digestates, both AD sites and on farm

141. Comments have also been received from Damian Hinds MP, which included:

- Concerns have been raised over the potential for spillage from the AD and contamination of the River Wey chalk stream. Engagement with the EA is encouraged in this respect.
- Careful consideration should also be given to the potential for odour emissions.

- Care should also be taken in respect of the visual impact of the proposed development on the rural area of East Hampshire, the South Downs National Park and the historic market town of Alton.
- It is recognised that there is a potential need for an AD – the question remains as to whether this is the right location for an AD and whether any negative externalities can be countered.
- It would also be helpful to understand what monitoring and compliance mechanisms would be in place, and what the consequences would be if assurances made in the planning application (for example odours or vehicular movements were not to materialise).

142. The above issues will be addressed within the following commentary except where identified as not being relevant to the decision. Such matters may be covered in [Non-material planning issues raised in representations](#).

### **Habitats Regulation Assessment:**

143. In accordance with [Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017](#) (the Habitats Regulations), Hampshire County Council (as a ‘competent authority’) must undertake a formal assessment of the implications of any new projects we may be granting planning permission for e.g. proposals that may be capable of affecting the qualifying interest features of the following European designated sites:

- Special Protection Areas [SPAs];
- Special Areas of Conservation [SACs]; and
- RAMSARs.

144. Collectively this assessment is described as ‘Habitats Regulations Assessment’ [HRA]. The HRA will need to be carried out unless the project is wholly connected with or necessary to the conservation management of such sites’ qualifying features.

145. It is acknowledged that the proposed development includes environmental mitigation essential for the delivery of the proposed development regardless of any effect they may have on impacts on European designated sites.

146. Natural England have been consulted in respect of the proposed development and raise no objection subject to appropriate mitigation being secured. Natural England confirm that without appropriate mitigation the application would have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Solent designated sites, including the Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA). Concerns were also raised that the source foodstock crops (rather than household and commercial waste) could be used in the AD process and this could result in the concentration of foodcrops that would lead to the increased presence of nitrates in the ground which will in turn harm the SPA. The applicant has confirmed (in the clarification letter dated 27th June 2023) that no such crops will be used in the AD process and that

the AD process will rely on household and commercial waste. On this basis Natural England confirm that, subject to an appropriate condition that no objection is raised to this aspect of the scheme.

147. The County Ecologist has been consulted in respect of the application and has agreed that in respect of Air Quality Impacts (with respect to dust) and Water Quality Impact that they can be dealt with by condition in a CEMP. Further information was requested in respect of survey data and biodiversity net gain (BNG). This information has subsequently been submitted and the County Ecologist raises no objection to the proposal subject to conditions.
148. The HRA screening hereby carried out by the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority considers the proposed development to have no likely significant effect on the identified European designated sites as potential impact can be mitigated through relevant conditions.
149. Links to the emerging requirements for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements are covered in the [Ecology](#) section of the commentary section of this report, where they are relevant to the proposal.

## **Climate Change**

150. Hampshire County Council declared a [Climate Emergency](#) on 17 June 2019. Two targets have been set for the County Council, and these also apply to Hampshire as a whole. These are to be carbon neutral by 2050 and preparing to be resilient to the impacts of temperature rise. A [Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan](#) has since been adopted by the Council. The [Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan](#) notes the priority of creating new infrastructure which is carbon efficient and resilient to climate change. It includes an action 'to enable, support and deliver a reduction in carbon emissions associated with the built environment to net zero (neutrality) by 2050 and a climate resilient infrastructure — both existing and new. The Action Plan is clear that the priority for buildings and infrastructure will be to work with stakeholders to develop a holistic systems-based approach that considers the whole-life cycle of construction to occupation including the consumption of energy and water, and the integration climate change adaptation. This includes (by not exclusively) consideration of issues such as energy efficiency, energy consumption, on-site renewable energy generation, integration with wider renewable energy generation and electrification, utilities — water, gas, electricity, reduce consumption of resources (water, energy), planning - new developments (e.g. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)), biodiversity and green infrastructure, resilience to weather, flood risk, preservation of historic buildings and water resilience.
151. When it comes to planning decisions, consideration of the relevant national or local climate change planning policy is of relevance. The Strategy and Action Plan do not form part of the Development Plan so are not material to decision making. However, it is true to say that many of the principles of the

Strategy and Action Plan may be of relevance to the proposal due to the nature of the development.

152. In terms of the carbon impact of the proposal, the application includes, within the planning statement a section on the benefits of anaerobic digestion. It is estimated that in 2018 that there was some 13 million tonnes of food waste generated in the UK each year (3.5 million tonnes generated before food products left the farm gate and 9.5 million tonnes produced by UK households, the hospitality & food service, food manufacture, retail and wholesale sectors).
153. In 2019, the waste sector accounted for 4% of all GHG emissions, 75% of these came from landfill. A significant issue with GHG emissions from landfill is that they contain a large proportion of methane which is a highly potent GHG, estimated to be 28 times more powerful than CO<sub>2</sub> over a 100-year period, and 86 times more powerful over a 20 year period.
154. Where food waste can be captured and separated from the residual waste stream it is possible to manage it within an AD facility. Management of food waste in an AD facility has been identified as the most preferable waste management method. It is considered to have the following benefits:
- Reduces the volume of food waste sent to landfill. Landfill has a number of environmental disbenefits including:
  - uncontrolled release of carbon dioxide and methane to atmosphere;
  - putrescible organic waste generates odour which is hard to control at landfill sites causing amenity issues; and
  - decay of waste within a landfill generates leachate which if released into groundwater or surface water can be harmful to the environment or if captured requires treatment.
  - AD facilities can generate and capture methane which can be used to produce:
    - Heat;
    - Electricity; and
    - Fuel.
155. It is estimated that a 50,000 tonne per annum food waste plant could result in carbon savings of approximately 43,760 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year via:
- 30,835 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e from avoided landfill methane emissions;
  - 1,690 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e from displaced fertilizer; and
  - 11,235 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e from displaced natural gas.
156. The proposed development has been subject to consideration of Policy, Policy 2 (Climate change – mitigation and adoption) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#). This policy requires, where possible, that waste developments should reduce vulnerability and provide resilience to the impacts of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the more sustainable use of resources and developing energy recovery facilities. The proposals meet these policy requirements by reason of the diversion of food waste that

would otherwise be diverted to landfill and which would therefore create greenhouse gas emissions and also in respect of the energy recovery facility that creates methane that will be either provided to the gas network or to heat and power the AD facility or provide electricity for the national grid.

## **Commentary**

157. The commentary section provides more information on the key planning issues in relation to the proposal.

### Policy context

158. This first section of the commentary summarises the main policy context for the proposal.

159. The proposals seek to provide an AD on-site that will divert food waste from landfill and provide an energy recovery facility, which will provide gas to the gas network and electricity to the national grid. For the reasons outlined, the proposal is considered to meet the requirements of Policy 2 (Climate change mitigation and adaptation).

160. The proposals are supported by Policy 25 (Sustainable waste management) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) as they encourage waste to be managed at the highest achievable level of the waste hierarchy. Furthermore, the development is likely to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill, and will be a co-location of activities, comprising an AD facility and a WTS. The WTS would have a capacity of 20,000 tpa. and the AD facility a capacity of 50,000 tpa. The current capacity at the WTS/MRF is 125,000tpa.

161. The specific use of the AD facility will be to manage municipal and commercial food waste from Hampshire. This will include food waste and other organic materials, recyclable waste, green waste, and residual waste (i.e. waste which is left after recycling and composting). It is anticipated that the majority of the waste would be from the municipal waste stream, although, as presently occurs at the site, there would be a small proportion of commercial and industrial waste accepted at the site. The applicant has confirmed that no crops such as maize will be used in the AD process.

162. The proposed development is intended to meet the needs of Hampshire. However, it should be noted that the applicant is a commercial operator and may well accept waste materials from outside Hampshire. Given that the management of waste is not fixed to administrative boundaries, with waste arising in one authority's area frequently being managed in another, this is considered to be acceptable. More information on this aspect is set out in [Demonstration of need and capacity for waste management](#) and [Application of the waste hierarchy and proximity principle](#).

163. The operations currently occupying the site are safeguarded under Policy 26 (Safeguarding – waste infrastructure) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#). As such, alternative capacity would be expected to be provided should these operations come to an end. The existing MRF is to be replaced by a new facility at Chickenhall Lane, Eastleigh EBC ref [\(CS/22/9246\)](#) and its demolition will not take place until Chickenhall Lane is operational. More information on this aspect is set out in [Replacement of the existing waste management uses](#).
164. The proposal will contribute to the requirement for 0.39 million tpa of additional non-hazardous waste recovery capacity as set out under Policy 27 (Capacity for waste management development) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#). More information on this aspect is set out in [Demonstration of need and capacity for waste management](#).
165. Policy 28 (Energy recovery development) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) requires that Energy Recovery Development be used to divert biodegradable waste from landfill and provide combined heat and power. Whether this proposal meets this requirement is set out in the later section on [energy](#).
166. Policy 29 (Locations and sites for waste management) also supports the proposal, given that the site is located on the strategic road network and has been previously developed for waste uses. More information on this aspect is set out in [Suitability of site location and alternatives](#). Whether the site is supported by Policy 12 (Managing traffic) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) is set out later in [Highways impact](#).
167. Whether the proposal is considered to be in accordance with paragraph 11 of the [NPPF \(2021\)](#), Policy 1 (Sustainable minerals and waste development) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) and Policy CP1 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development) of the [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#) will be considered in the remaining sections of this commentary section.

#### Demonstration of need and capacity for waste management

##### *Need and waste hierarchy:*

168. It is clear that there is a significant volume of food waste generated in the UK which needs to be managed in a sustainable manner, minimising the environmental impact of waste management and delivering maximum benefit in terms of the use of our resources.
169. Paragraph 158 of the [NPPF \(2021\)](#) states that planning authorities should not require applications to demonstrate the overall need for renewable energy development as set out below:

*‘When determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon development, local planning authorities should:*

- a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and*
- b) approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable’.*

170. The thrust of government policy over the past 10 years has been for food waste to be diverted from landfill and where possible for food waste to be treated at an AD facility. The [Environment Act 2021](#) introduced a legislative commitment for waste collection authorities to introduce separate weekly food waste collection. At present, only Eastleigh, Rushmoor and Portsmouth have separate food waste collections. However, there will be the imminent need for the remaining Hampshire districts and boroughs to introduce collections. On this basis it will be necessary for Hampshire to ensure it has sufficient capacity to deal with the inevitable increase in separate food waste arisings and in particular for waste generated via the Hampshire Waste Services Contract. Some indicative modelling undertaken by the Waste Disposal Authority has show that food waste collections could mean a range of c41,000- c61,000 tonnes per annum of food waste per annum requiring management.

171. The **TA** confirms that the deliveries of organic waste will be from Transfer Stations from the following sites within Hampshire:

- Rushmoor;
- Basingstoke and Deane;
- Hart;
- Portsmouth;
- Gosport;
- Fareham;
- Havant; and
- East Hampshire

172. In addition, Southampton, Otterbourne or Andover TS could also deliver to the site.

173. It is important to note that the requirements for food waste collection set out in the Act, will also apply to businesses as well but this will be implemented later.

174. The site is currently safeguarded as a waste site. This is considered in more detail in the section on [Replacement of the existing waste management uses](#).

175. Policy 25 (Sustainable waste development sets out a long-term aim is to enable net self-sufficiency in waste movements and divert 100% of waste from landfill. It states that '*all waste development should:*
- a) encourage waste to be managed at the highest achievable level within the waste hierarchy; and*
  - b) reduce the amount of residual waste currently sent to landfill; and*
  - c) be located near to the sources of waste, or markets for its use; and / or*
  - d) maximise opportunities to share infrastructure at appropriate existing mineral or waste sites.*

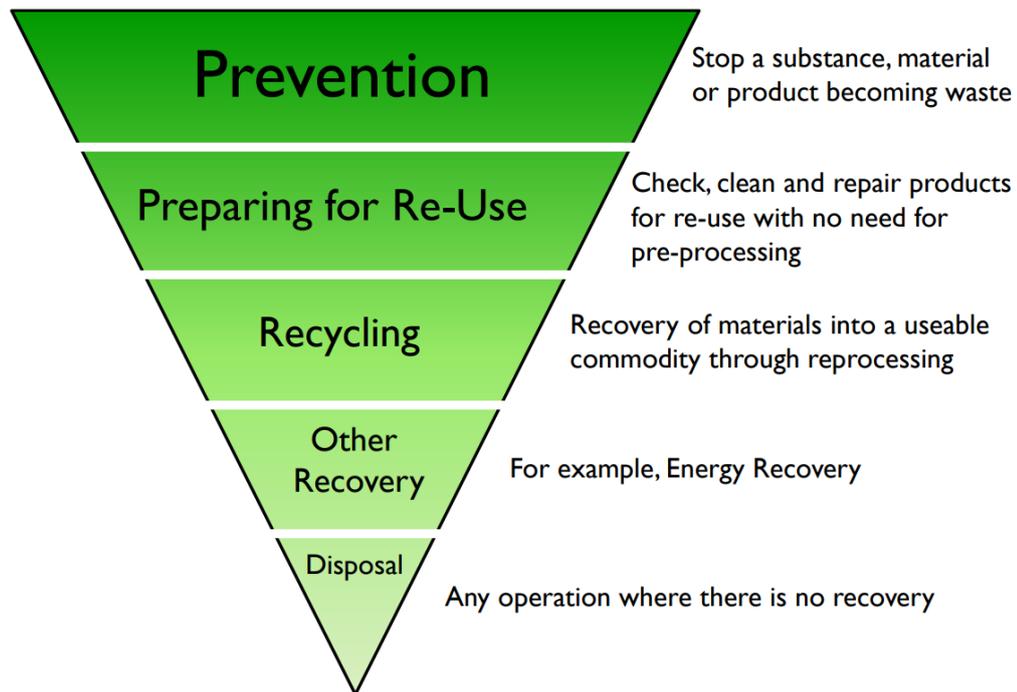
*The co-location of activities with existing operations will be supported, where appropriate, if commensurate with the operational life of the site, and where it would not result in intensification of uses that would cause unacceptable harm to the environment or communities in a local area (including access routes), or prolong any unacceptable impacts associated with the existing development.*

*Provision will be made for the management of non-hazardous waste arisings with an expectation of achieving by 2020 at least:*

- 60% recycling; and*
- 95% diversion from landfill.*

176. Article 4 of the [Waste Framework Directive](#) sets out the appropriate means of waste management. Driving waste up the waste hierarchy is an integral part of the [Waste Management Plan for England \(2021\)](#) as well as national planning policy for waste. The 'waste hierarchy' gives order and priority to waste management options, from prevention through to disposal (e.g. landfill). When waste is created, it gives priority to preparing it for re-use, followed by recycling, recovery, and lastly disposal (e.g. landfill). The waste hierarchy is a material consideration when making a decision on a planning application. The requirement to apply the waste hierarchy is set out in the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 and the amendments laid out in [The Waste \(England and Wales\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2012](#). The Waste Management Plan includes a key thread to encourage and promote the delivery of sustainable waste management underpinned through the application of the waste hierarchy.

177. To achieve compliance with the waste hierarchy, waste management policy has incentivised the prevention and re-use of waste as far as practical and driven a major increase in recycling and composting. The waste hierarchy is shown in Figure 1.



178. Paragraph 016 of the [NPPG \(Waste\)](#) is clear that everyone involved in waste management is expected to use all reasonable methods to apply the waste hierarchy, except where, for specific waste streams, departing from the hierarchy is justified in life cycle on the overall effects of generations and the management of waste to assist and ensure that waste should be recycled and is not sent to landfill. This legal obligation on waste producers and transferors provides over-arching controls within the waste industry and assists in ensuring that waste that should be recycled is not sent to a recovery facility or landfill for treatment or final disposal. It also seeks to ensure that planning decisions are made in the context of the waste hierarchy.
179. The principles of the waste hierarchy are translated into Policy 25 (Sustainable waste management) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#), which seeks to divert 100% of waste from landfill. The proposal is also supported by Policy 25 (Sustainable waste management) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) as the facility's would encourage waste to be managed at the highest achievable level of the waste hierarchy. Furthermore, the development is likely to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill, and will be a co-location of activities, comprising an AD facility and a WTS.
180. Waste transfer sits in the middle of the hierarchy above recovery. AD would sit in the recovery stage. The proposed WTS and AD is policy compliant in that it will encourage the reduction in biodegradable waste that will be sent to landfill. The [Guidance and applying the Waste Hierarchy](#) states that 'other recovery' includes the AD process. This sits above 'disposal' in relation to the hierarchy. The proposal is considered to meet parts a, b, c and d of Policy 25 as the proposal would allow for the recovery of food waste, reducing the need for disposal. It is also clear that there will be an increased

requirement for food waste collections in Hampshire on the back of the Environment Act provisions. Furthermore, the proposal seeks to co-locate with an existing (but to be reconfigured) WTS. On this basis, the proposal is considered to meet the requirements of Policy 25 (Sustainable waste management) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) in relation to the waste hierarchy.

*Capacity:*

181. Policy 27 (Capacity for waste management development) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) sets out the objectives for waste management capacity within the plan period. *'In order to reach the objectives of the Plan and to deal with arisings by 2030 of 2.62mtpa of non-hazardous waste, 2.49mtpa of inert waste and 0.16mtpa of hazardous waste'*. It sets out minimum amounts of additional waste infrastructure capacity which are estimated to be required, which in the case of non-hazardous recovery capacity is of 0.39mtpa. The Policy sets out criteria for where support will be given if they maintain and provide additional capacity for non-hazardous recycling and recovery including new sites to provide additional capacity.
182. There are a number of AD facilities in Hampshire to include Manor Farm, Farleigh Wallop and Bushywarren Lane, Herriard. The applicant states that 2021, these two facilities processed some 33,000 tonnes of food waste.
183. The planning applications for other Hampshire AD facilities stated that the following tonnage of waste would be as follows (at the time of determination);

*Table 1: AD tonnage*

<b>Site</b>	<b>App ref</b>	<b>Food waste (tpa)</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Basingstoke Waste Water Treatment	15/03425	None	Operational. Sludge Treatment only
Manor Farm, Farleigh Wallop	BDB/75034	30,000	Operational. Mixture of commercial and municipal. Additional 10,000 slurry
Bushywarren Lane, Herriard	BDB/76332	16,700	Operational. 29,200 overall of which 12,500 from crops. Commercial foodwaste.
Chickenhall Lane, Eastleigh	S/13/73507	67,000	Not implemented. Not operational
Hartley Park Farm, Selborne Road	22267/016	20,000	Commercial food waste

Down Farm, Odiham	16/02203	None	Operational Woodchip only
Selborne Brickworks	20661/048	22,000	Not operational

184. Whilst in theory the operational food waste capacity as set out in the preceding table is some 88,700 tpa, it should be noted that much of the capacity is are focused on existing commercial food waste requirements or other AD requirements and not kerbside food waste. The distinct differences here between the sites is that the Alton site would take the majority of the waste from the Hampshire Waste Services contract.
185. As noted above, the Environment Act provisions could mean between c41,000 and c60,000 tonnes of waste requiring management in Hampshire. The proposed AD will (after rejecting waste materials at some 10%) process some 45,000 tonnes of food waste per annum. The proposed AD would therefore make an important contribution to the minimum requirement for 0.39 million tpa of additional non-hazardous waste recovery capacity as set out in by Policy 27 (Capacity for waste management development) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#).
186. The proposed development complies with the provisions of the [National Planning Policy for Waste \(2014\)](#), which requires applicants to demonstrate the need for waste management facilities only where such proposals are not consistent with an up to date Local Plan. Consideration should also be given by the planning authority to various locational factors to include protection of water quality, landscape and visual impacts, nature conservation, traffic and access, air emissions, odours, noise, light and litter. These matters are addressed in other parts of this commentary section.
187. The proposal would also help contribute to the delivery of renewable energy generation as set out in [Energy generation](#).

#### *Capacity for waste from outside of Hampshire*

188. Some concerns have been raised about the potential for the proposal to deal with waste from outside of Hampshire. These are noted.
189. Paragraph 006 of the NPPG (Waste) states that *'the principles of self-sufficiency and proximity (commonly referred to as the 'proximity principle') are set out in Article 16 of the Waste Framework Directive, Local Planning Authorities are required, under Regulation 18 of the 2011 Regulations which transposed the Directive, to have regard to these requirements when exercising their planning functions relating to waste management'*. In addition, paragraph 007 of the NPPG (Waste) states that although it is the aim that each Waste Planning Authority to manage all of its own waste *'there is no expectation that each Local Planning Authority should deal solely with its own waste to meet the requirements of the self-sufficiency and proximity principles. Nor does the proximity principle require using the absolute closest*

*facility to the exclusion of all other considerations. Furthermore, there could also be significant economies of scale for local authorities working together to assist with the development of a network of waste management facilities to enable waste to be handled effectively’.*

190. [Defra’s Energy from Waste Guide \(2014\)](#) also summarises the issues of the proximity principle and energy recovery neatly. Paragraph 152 states that *‘the principle is often over-interpreted to mean that all waste has to be managed as close to its source as possible to the exclusion of other considerations, and that local authorities individually need the infrastructure required to do so. This is not the case. Indeed, the final part of the Article itself states, “The principles of proximity and self-sufficiency shall not mean that each Member State has to possess the full range of final recovery facilities within that Member State”. Clearly if not even the entire country needs to have the full range of facilities, a specific local authority does not have to. While there is an underlying principle of waste being managed close to its source, there is no implication of local authorities needing to be self-sufficient in handling waste from their own area’.* Paragraph 153 goes on to say that *‘the proximity principle itself requires mixed municipal waste “...to be recovered in one of the nearest appropriate installations, by means of the most appropriate methods and technologies, in order to ensure a high level of protection for the environment and public health”.* This has a number of implications:
- “one of the nearest” means it doesn’t have to be the absolute closest facility to the exclusion of all other considerations, including cost;
  - It may be justified to use a more distant solution if it provides a more appropriate method or technology to ensure overall a higher level of protection of the environment and public health;
  - It applies to the network of facilities in the EU – it doesn’t mean a new facility has to be constructed if capacity doesn’t exist in that country.
191. There is nothing in the legislation or the proximity principle that says accepting waste from another council, city, region or country is unacceptable; in many cases it may be the best economic and environmental solution and/or be the outcome most consistent with the proximity principle. Paragraph 154 of the Guide clearly states that *‘there is an expectation on local authorities to work together (re-enforced by the need to demonstrate that they have done so through the Duty to Co-operate provisions of the Localism Act 2011) to ensure that waste needs across their respective areas are handled properly and appropriately. However, it is recognised that to many, accepting waste from elsewhere does appear wrong and it is often cited in objections to a planning proposal or to demonstrate that a plan is flawed’.*
192. Paragraph 155 of the Guide also states that *‘the concern about accepting waste from elsewhere is often a proxy for more fundamental concerns about the scale of a plant on a given site and the impacts of transporting waste,*

particularly if it is perceived that taking waste from elsewhere is driving the development of a facility in a given community than would otherwise be required to deal with 'their' waste.

193. The management of waste is not fixed to administrative boundaries, with waste arising in one authority's area frequently being managed in another. Furthermore, in order to secure economies of scale, waste management facilities will often have a catchment which extends beyond the boundary of the planning area within which it is situated. This is recognised in the [NPPW](#) that recognises '*that new facilities will need to serve catchment areas large enough to secure the economic viability of the plant*'. For these reasons the management of waste is a cross-boundary strategic matter, the planning for which requires co-operation between Waste Planning Authorities. The movement of certain wastes (particularly waste from businesses and industry) to different locations for management either into or out of Hampshire is commonplace.
194. Energy generation from waste or other low carbon fuels is an important component of Hampshire's strategy for generating low carbon and renewable energy. More information on this is set out in the [Energy generation](#) section.
195. The location and acceptability of the site for waste uses are already established through the grant of previous planning permissions at the site. This is considered in more detail in [Suitability of site location and alternatives](#).
196. Taking all matters into account, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy 27 (Capacity for waste management development) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#).

#### Replacement of the existing waste management uses

197. The proposal would result in the change of the existing MRF and WTS uses from the existing site and replacement with a reconfigured WTS and AD facility. The application site is a safeguarded site as set out under Policy 26 (Safeguarding - waste infrastructure) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#).
198. The proposals are policy compliant and in effect replace one safeguarded waste use (i.e. a combined MRF/WTS use) with another and make a contribution towards non-hazardous waste recovery. However, with the construction of the MRF at Chickenhall Lane, Eastleigh ([CS/22/92463](#)) the MRF at the application site will become redundant. The proposed combined WTS/ AD facility will be a safeguarded site if planning permission is granted.

199. On this basis, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy 26 (Safeguarding - waste infrastructure) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#).

#### Suitability of site location and alternatives

200. The location and acceptability of the site for waste uses are already established through the grant of previous planning permissions at the site. This is considered in more detail below. Therefore, its acceptability as a waste use has already been determined. The focus here is therefore on the relative impact of the proposed development.
201. Policy 29 (Locations and sites for waste management) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) seeks to direct waste management sites to suitable locations. Given that the site is an existing waste management site there is a presumption that this policy requirement has previously been met. Policy 29 requires that suitable sites include those that are located on strategic road corridors, on previously developed land, and is of a scale compatible with the setting.
202. As already set out, the precedent for using this Site for waste management uses is already established. Therefore, what is important here is the change of the waste management proposed. The [HMWP \(2013\)](#) expects market led delivery and therefore does not identify and allocate any individual sites identified for recycling and recovery facilities. To provide more flexibility to the market, this Plan identifies broad locations within Hampshire that would be suitable in principle for waste management facilities. This approach recognises the 'spatial' needs of different types of waste facilities, including the demand for certain sites, and the constraints that limit the location of some facility types.
203. The Site will become available for redevelopment as a result of the relocation of MRF capacity to Eastleigh which means that the Alton MRF will no longer be required. The NPPW (2014) acknowledges that particular priority should be given to the re-use of brownfield land. The site has a direct access to the A31, which is part of the strategic road network (as set out in the [Key Diagram](#) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#)) and the proposal comprises the use of previously developed land. Part 1 of Policy 29 sets out criteria that waste development needs to meet. To accord with this part of the policy, the proposal needs to meet criteria i-iii. The proposal does not meet the criteria as it is not in an urban area, planning area of development although it is acknowledged that the Site is located on a strategic road as illustrated by the Key Diagram of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#). As the proposal does not meet part 1, part 2 of the policy is also not relevant. Part 3 is therefore the only part of the policy which is of relevance to proposal and covers development in other locations. It states that it would be supported if the Site has good transport connections and/or markets for the type of waste being management and that a special need for the location and Site is justified, specifically for the management of food waste as result of the requirements of the Environment

Act. For the reasons outlined in the [Policy context](#) and the [Demonstration of need and capacity for waste management](#) sections, it is considered that the proposal has effectively demonstrated a need for the development in terms of capacity, the ability to manage food waste, divert it from landfill alongside its potential to generate energy from waste. Furthermore, as already set out, the Site already has an established waste use to the principle of the Site location for waste uses cannot be disputed. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with the relevant provisions of part 3 of Policy 29 (Locations and sites for waste management development) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#).

204. Additional issues with regard to the suitability of the site are also considered with reference to on-site material planning consideration to include the proximity of the site to the South Down National Park Site, potential impact on the landscape character of the area, landscaping and biodiversity net gain are covered elsewhere in this commentary section of the report.

#### *Alternative locations:*

205. The consideration of alternatives is more specifically related to EIA developments. This proposal is not an EIA which means that Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations 2017 does not apply.

206. The applicant has not considered alternative sites or locations to pursue an AD facility. Instead the applicant has pointed to the fact that the existing MRF on-site is to be replaced by a new facility at Chickenhall Lane Eastleigh, EBC reference ([CS/22/92463](#)) and as a safeguarded site on the strategic road network the application site is a suitable location for the proposed AD use.

#### Energy generation

207. The Governments' focus on ensuring a security of energy supply and renewable energy is clearly set out in national policy and guidance. National energy security is becoming more of a nationally important issue and one that the Government places significant weight on. Renewable energy will help the UK to tackle climate change and energy recovery is identified as a key part of this in National Policy Statement for Energy. Indeed, paragraph 3.3.20 of the draft revised NPS EN-1 states 'there is an urgent need for new electricity generating capacity to meet our energy objectives.' This will help with a security of supply.

208. The application is also supported by Policy 28 (Energy recovery development) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#), as the proposals will help to divert biodegradable waste away from landfill. The site will be capable of producing heat and electricity, although the heat produced will be utilised on site.

209. Policy 28 (Energy recovery development) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) is of relevance here. It states that energy recovery development should:
- a) be used to divert waste from landfill and where other waste treatment options further up the waste hierarchy have been discounted; and
  - b) wherever practicable, provide combined heat and power. As a minimum requirement the scheme should recover energy through electricity production and the plant should be designed to have the capability to deliver heat in the future; and
  - c) provide sustainable management arrangements for waste treatment residues arising from the facility.
210. Proposals for the sustainable management of waste residues from energy generation should minimise, so far as possible, the amounts of waste going to landfill. Where deposits to landfill are necessary, the most sustainable location should be used.

*Source of energy:*

211. Generating energy from waste can provide a valuable domestic energy source contributing to energy security, contribute to our renewable energy targets which are aimed at decarbonising energy generation; and complement other renewable energy sources such as wind or solar. Energy recovery from residual waste is an initiative encouraged in order to decarbonise energy. Current government guidance sets out examples to reduce emissions. In particular, with regards to waste, this focuses on providing opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy technologies and providing opportunities for energy and heat. Energy from waste therefore bridges two sectors – waste management and energy generation. The evolution of these sectors is of relevance here as waste management practices move toward resource management and energy recovery seeks to make the best use of renewables and low carbon fuel sources. [Defra's Energy from Waste Guide \(2014\)](#) confirms that the Government sees a long-term role for energy from waste both as a waste management tool and as a source of energy. Government policy is to move towards zero landfill, and the treatment of wastes and energy recovery is one of a number of measures which can be used to deliver this. ERF for planning purposes is a low carbon energy source, even if it cannot be classified as non-carbon.
212. [Defra's Energy from Waste Guide \(2014\)](#) acknowledges that long term changes in the energy mix, particularly the decarbonisation of the UK's electricity generation system, has significant consequences for the relative merits of carbon emissions when comparing energy recovery with disposing of waste at landfill. It identifies a potential balance point whereas energy decarbonises, increasing efficiency alone is no longer sufficient to ensure energy from waste is better than landfill in carbon terms, with the biogenic content of the waste feedstock becoming critical.

213. Government policy over the last 15 years or so year has placed focus on the deployment of renewable and low carbon energy policy. This includes the [Energy White Paper \(2007\)](#), the [UK Renewable Energy Strategy \(2009\)](#), the [UK Low Carbon Transition Plan \(2009\)](#), the [Energy Act \(2013\)](#) and the [Energy White Paper 2020](#). These have provided a positive policy framework to facilitate and support investment in renewable energy and increase the use of renewable energy as well as helping to establish the legislative framework and measures for delivering electricity market reform. Pulling this all together, the clear message from government policy relating to energy policy is one of urgency.
214. The [Energy White Paper 2020](#) seeks to provide a positive policy framework to facilitate and support investment in renewable energy; the aim of the UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2009) is to radically increase the use of renewable energy; and the UK Low Carbon Transition Plan records that the scale of change needed in its energy system is unparalleled. In short, the expectation of industry is to provide as much renewable energy capacity as swiftly as possible. The [Energy White Paper 2020](#) identifies a continuing and future role for energy recovery.
215. The [Waste Management Plan for England \(2021\)](#) is clear that the government supports efficient energy recovery from residual waste. Energy from waste is generally the best management option for waste that cannot be reused or recycled in terms of environmental impact and getting value from the waste as a resource, and the Plan states that ‘recovery plays an important role in diverting waste from landfill’. The Resources and Waste Strategy promotes the greater efficiency of energy from waste plants through utilisation of the heat generated in district heating networks or by industry.
216. The [Waste Policy Review \(June 2011\)](#) also is clear that that waste management falls within the wider energy policy context insofar that recovering energy from waste which cannot be sensibly reused or recycled is an essential component of a well-balanced energy policy and underlines the importance of maximising energy recovery from the portion of waste which cannot be recycled.
217. The gas and electricity generation components form an integral part of the planning application. The facility proposes a new connection to the gas grid and two Combined Heat and Power (CPH) engines within the site. When gas is being exported from the site only one CPH engine will be operation, providing heat and electricity for the AD process. However, in the scenario where gas were not able to be injected into the gas grid, for short term technical reasons, then both CPH engines could be in operation thereby generating electricity for export.
218. The proposed AD facility will generate up to 1.5 megawatts (MW) of renewable electricity, of which up to 1.0MW could be exported to the national grid.

219. Food waste is defined in paragraph 19 of the Defra [Energy from Waste Guide \(2014\)](#) as renewable energy (i.e. which comes from renewable non-fossil sources. For energy from waste this means things that were recently growing). The [Defra's Energy from Waste Guide \(2014\)](#) is clear, that where there is residual waste (i.e. remaining waste that cannot be economically or practically reused or recycled), the aim is to get the most value from it via energy recovery, where doing so is the best overall environmental option. Building on this, paragraph 153 of the NPPF (2021) seeks to increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat.
220. As already acknowledged, Hampshire County Council declared a climate emergency on 17 June 2019 and the subsequent publication of a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. The Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan notes the priority of energy generation and distribution to enable and support renewable energy generation capacity and distribution across the county, with a focus on providing low carbon, resilient energy to residents and businesses, whilst reducing costs. It states that the priority for energy will be to work with local partners and communities to actively promote and enable the generation of local, renewable, resilient energy which would stimulate and support green growth in Hampshire maximising the use of technology and innovation. This should be delivered through a range of initiatives at all scales — i.e. large-scale, community owned or individual household schemes. This includes the use of renewable energy, decarbonise grid/gas, the use of new technologies technology and ensuring resilient energy systems.
221. There are concerns raised by Natural England and a number of local representations with regard to the source of feedstock for the AD process. These concerns focus on the potential use of crops, such as maize as such a source. In response to these concerns the applicant has confirmed that the AD will use only household and commercial food waste. There would be no use of crops. This is an important clarification in that the use of purpose grown crops could result in the intensification of use of agricultural land and which in turn could result in harm to the Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA). In light of the commitment made by the applicant in respect of the feedstock source, a planning condition is recommended restricting this to household and commercial food waste. This is included in **Appendix A**.

*Grid connection:*

222. Concerns were raised through the consultation process about the lack of connection from the site to the national grid. These are noted. It should be noted that there would be a below ground connection to the local gas distribution network an on-site connection. The rest of the energy would be used on site to power the plant. A condition is included relation to the connection to the grid in **Appendix A**.

223. There is no evidence to suggest that the gas and electricity generated by the Site would not be required by the network.

*Energy efficiency and other matters:*

224. Issues such as energy efficiency, efficient use of raw materials and avoidance, recovery and disposal of wastes will be considered by the Environment Agency when assessing the Environmental Permit. The [National Planning Policy for Waste \(2014\)](#) makes it clear that WPAs should not *'concern themselves with implementing the planning strategy in the Local Plan and not with the control of processes which are a matter for the pollution control authorities. Waste planning authorities should work on the assumption that the relevant pollution control regime will be properly applied and enforced'*.

225. Taking all matters into account, the ability of the proposal to generate renewable energy by connecting to the National Grid, means the proposal is clearly supported by national policy and guidance. Government policy requires that significant weight be given to a proposal's provision of renewable energy. The Energy White Paper 2020 and the NPPF (2021) make it clear that Local Authorities should look favourably upon planning applications for renewable energy developments. Low carbon energy derived from energy recovery of residual waste is strongly supported by national planning policy and the [HMWP \(2013\)](#), and this policy support should be given significant weight when considering the acceptability of the proposal. Subject to the proposed conditions, the proposal is considered to meet national policy and guidance in relation to energy generation as well as Policy 28 (Energy recovery development) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#).

*Heat generation*

226. As with energy, Policy 28 (Energy recovery development) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) is of relevance here. In relation to heat it states that, *'wherever practicable, proposals should provide combined heat and power. As a minimum requirement the scheme should recover energy through electricity production and the plant should be designed to have the capability to deliver heat in the future'*.

227. AD process generates biogas which will be utilised by two Combined Heat and Power (CHP) engines, which can generate up to 1.5 megawatts (MW) of heat. This heat will be only used in the AD process and not exported from site.

228. The heat generated will be used on site to power the plant.

229. It is clear to meet the principles of Policy 28 (Energy recovery development) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) by reusing the heat produced to power the plant. All other issues relating to CHP would be covered by the Environmental Permitting regime.

#### Impacts on the South Downs National Park and the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

230. The Site is located approximately 1.2km north-west from the northern boundary of South Downs National Park (SDNP) and 8.5 km west from the western boundary of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

231. Paragraph 174 of the [NPPF \(2021\)](#) requires that planning decisions contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, amongst other considerations 'protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)'. Furthermore, paragraph 176 states that *'great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas'*.

232. The proposal is located within 1.2 km of the South Downs National Park and 8.5km of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is therefore important that full consideration is given to the potential impact on the National Park and the AONB.

233. Policy CP20 (Landscape) of [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#) is of relevance here. This states that the special characteristics of the district's natural environment will be conserved and enhanced. *'New development will be required to:*

- a) *conserve and enhance the natural beauty, tranquillity, wildlife and cultural heritage of the South Downs National Park and its setting, and promote the opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities, and be in accordance with the ambitions within the emerging South Downs Management Plan;*
- b) *protect and enhance local distinctiveness sense of place and tranquillity by applying the principles set out in the district's Landscape Character Assessments, including the Community/Parish Landscape Character Assessments;*
- c) *protect and enhance settlements in the wider landscape, land at the urban edge and green corridors extending into settlements;*

- d) *protect and enhance natural and historic features which contribute to the distinctive character of the district's landscape, such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows, soils, rivers, river corridors, ditches, ponds, ancient sunken lanes, ancient tracks, rural buildings and open areas;*
- e) *incorporate appropriate new planting to enhance the landscape setting of the new development which uses local materials, native species and enhances biodiversity;*
- f) *maintain, manage and enhance the green infrastructure networks (see Policy CP28 Green Infrastructure).*

234. There is a precedent for waste uses in this location through the grant of the previous planning consents. The existing MRF and WTS uses are not subject to planning conditions that control the hours of operation of the site.

235. In order to assess potential harm from the scale and massing and design of the proposed buildings and structures the presence of the existing buildings on site is a significant material consideration and in this sense harm should be measured in terms of relative harm.

236. The County Landscape Officer has been consulted in respect of the application and provided comments in respect of the submitted plans to include a landscape scheme and the **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**. With respect to the potential impact of the proposed development the LVIA states that there is little visibility predicted from within the SDNP – ‘from those locations where visibility would occur, the Proposed Development would not have any influence upon the views which would be appreciably different to the influence of the existing MRF.’

237. Concerns that were initially raised in relation to the colour of the proposed tanks, the loss of existing screen vegetation along the northern boundary and discrepancies between proposed mitigation in the Landscape and Ecological reports.

238. The South Downs National Park Authority raised concerns in relation to lighting impacts, the proposed materials, visual impacts but it was noted that the proposals could result in a minor adverse impact upon the setting of the National Park. However, it was also noted that if the Landscape Officer's advice is addressed to their satisfaction and a lighting scheme which overall reduces light pollution is proposed then the Authority raise no objection.

239. The applicant provided revised information in response to these concerns to include a revised landscape scheme that seeks to provide additional planting on the southern boundary of the site. As a result, the County Landscape Officer raised no objection to the proposal subject to conditions securing the implementation of the submitted landscape scheme and the agreement of an

acceptable colour and finish to the proposed buildings which are included in **Appendix A**.

240. The whole of the national park is a designated [International Dark Sky Reserve](#) and potential impact in this regard is a material planning consideration. Lighting impacts are covered in more detail in the section on [Lighting](#).
241. On the basis of the proposed mitigations and planning conditions, the proposal is in accordance with Policy CP20 (Landscape) of [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#).

#### Development in the countryside

242. The site is a well-established one used as a MRF/WTS and comprises Previously Developed Land (PDL). Whilst the site is located in the countryside as defined in the local plan the presence of the existing building and structures on site is a significant material planning consideration by which the application should be judged.
243. Paragraph 130 of the [NPPF \(2021\)](#) requires that planning decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping, and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. Furthermore, paragraph 174 states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by (amongst other considerations) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services.
244. Policy 5 (Protection of the countryside) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) states that minerals and waste development in the open countryside, outside the National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, will not be permitted unless it is a time-limited mineral extraction or related development or the nature of the development is related to countryside activities, meets local needs or requires a countryside or isolated location or the development provides a suitable reuse of previously developed land, including redundant farm or forestry buildings and their curtilages or hard standings. The policy also includes an expectation that the highest standards of design, operation and restoration will be met and there will be a requirement that it is restored in the event it is no longer required for minerals and waste use.
245. Policy CP19 (Development in the countryside) of the is of the [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#) of relevance. This states that '*The approach to sustainable*

*development in the countryside, defined as the area outside settlement policy boundaries, is to operate a policy of general restraint in order to protect the countryside for its own sake. The only development allowed in the countryside will be that with a genuine and proven need for a countryside location, such as that necessary for farming, forestry, or other rural enterprises (see Policy CP6)'. Furthermore, Policy CP20 (Landscape) of the [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#) is of relevance here in particular parts a, b, d and e which relate to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, tranquillity of the South Downs National Park and its setting, protection of Landscape Character, and planting.*

246. Policy CP20 (Landscape) of [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#) is again of relevance here.
247. The scale and massing of the proposed development, with the exception of the odour stack is no higher than the existing building on-site. The majority of the buildings are located within the footprint of the building to be demolished. However, new structures, to include an AD tank, the two CPH plants and the emergency flare are to be provide to the north of the demolished building. All the proposed works are to be contained with the application site and therefore involve the use of PDL. In effect, the proposals seek consent for the replacement of existing barrel roofed building with a number of structures of comparable scale and massing.
248. The impact of the proposed development on the wider area and an assessment of potential harm in this regard has been set out in the submitted **Landscape Visual Impact Assessment**. This concludes that the impact of the proposed development, when compared to the existing buildings on site is not material.
249. The County Landscape Architect has reviewed the LVIA and submitted **Landscape Scheme** (which provides for mitigation planting) and advises that the impact of the scheme on the countryside is acceptable.
250. Conditions are recommended in respect of the colour and finish of external materials (the applicant has requested a dark green colour), so as to ensure that the impact is compatible with a countryside location, and respect of the submitted landscaping scheme. These are included in **Appendix A**.
251. On the basis of the proposed mitigation and planning conditions, the proposal is in accordance with Policy 5 (Protection of the countryside) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) and Polices (Development in the countryside) and CP20 (Landscape) of the [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#).

Visual impact, landscape and arboriculture

252. Part D of Policy 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) states that '*Minerals and waste development should not.... have an unacceptable visual impact*'.
253. Policies CP19 (Development in the countryside) and CP20 (Landscape) of the [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#) are both of relevance here.
254. The proposals comprise the demolition of part of the existing building on site (at 15m high) with a series of similar sized buildings sited contained largely within the footprint of the demolished building or on land to its immediate north. The only structure that is higher than the existing building is the odour stack (which is 18m high). Also included within the application is an emergency flare stack.
255. The site is screened by existing mature vegetation. However, site is located on a valley floor and it is clearly visible from a number vantage points to include Froyle Footpath 15, which makes up part of the 'Saint Swithuns Way' long distance path, is located approximately 800m to the north-west of the development Site. Binsted Footpath 57 is located to the south-east, running between Binstead Road and Mill Court Lane which links to the 'Writers Way'.
256. As already noted, the site is located some 1.2km from the South Downs National Park.
257. Concerns were raised by Councillor Kemp-Gee and other representations about the adequacy of the current landscaping and screening to the southern and eastern aspects and the need for these to be improved. These concerns are noted.
258. The presence of the existing waste buildings on site is a significant material consideration in respect of the application and impact of the scale massing and design should be considered within the context of the existing buildings on site.
259. The application is supported by a **Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)** that provides an assessment in this regard. The LVIA seeks to provide a clear understanding of the site and its context, an understanding of the proposed development and how it would relate to the existing landscape and views; an understanding of its likely significant effects and; how any harm could be mitigated.
260. The LVIA confirms that the majority of existing vegetation will be retained (with the exception of a limited area of vegetation associated with gas pipeline). The effects of the proposed development on the landscape character of the area will not be significant. Whilst there will be a change in the assemblage of buildings their appearance and colour will be more suited to the largely rural context. All perimeter tree cover will be retained.

261. The odour stack will be 3m higher than the existing building. However, this will be a single point feature that will be screened by existing vegetation from certain views.
262. The flare stack is some 8.2m high and screened from many views by existing and proposed buildings and existing vegetation. The flare is to be fully contained and so the flare will not be visible. However, the LVIA notes that that when used at night time the occasional presence of the emergency flare may result in some very limited 'additional glow from the top of the enclosed flare stack at times (the naked flame would be wholly enclosed and would not be visible), but this would have very little appreciable influence upon the night-time environment. Night-time landscape and visual effects would not be significant'.
263. It is difficult to assess how often the emergency flare would be used as it is part of the back up process to ensure that excessive pressure in the tanks does not build up. For the emergency flare to be used there planning statement confirms that there will have to be a failure the ability to export gas from the site and both CPH engines to fail, which is presumably relatively rare. Furthermore, in such a scenario the applicants have indicated that they will slow down the AD process so as to reduce gas production until relevant issues are resolved. The LVIA concludes that the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development would not be significant. As such, the application does not include any additional mitigation measures.
264. All new build development will therefore be within the footprint of the existing building or on what is currently hard surfacing. The exception are the works to accommodate the proposed gas pipeline and kiosk. The proposals do not result in the loss of any trees on-site. In addition, it is noted that the site is relatively well screened by the presence of existing mature vegetation, that limits views into the site.
265. As already noted, the application is supported by a **Landscape Scheme** that mitigates for the loss of on-site vegetation. It also provides for three additional oak trees on-site.
266. The County Landscape Architect has reviewed the LVIA and confirms that its assessments of the effects is broadly fair assessment of its impact on the landscape character of the area.
267. The County Arboriculturist has reviewed the landscaping proposals and raises no objection to the proposals subject to a condition requiring trees are protected during the construction process.
268. Conditions are proposed in respect of the submission and approval of a landscaping scheme and of the colour of external materials to be used in the proposed development.

269. On the basis of the proposed mitigation and planning conditions, the proposal is in accordance with Policy 10 (Protection of public health, safety and amenity) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) as well as Policies 19 (Development in the countryside) and 20 (Landscape) CP20 (Landscape) of the [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#).

## Ecology

270. The site is located nearby to designated sites comprise East Hampshire Hangers SAC (Special Area of Conservation) and Upper Greensand Hangers: Wyck to Wheatley Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located 3.7km to south-east of the site and a number of locally designated nature conservation sites such as Ancient Woodland and SINCs (Site of Importance for Nature Conservation) located as close as 700m to the application site.

271. Paragraph 174 of the [NPPF \(2021\)](#) states that planning decisions ‘*should contribute to and enhance the natural environment*’. In addition, paragraph 175 of the [NPPF \(2021\)](#) states that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles: a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused; b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest; c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

272. Policy 3 (Protection of habitats and species) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) sets out a requirement for minerals and waste development to not have a significant adverse effect on, and where possible, should enhance, restore or create designated or important habitats and species. The policy sets out a list of sites, habitats and species which will be protected in accordance with the level of their relative importance. The policy states that development which is likely to have a significant adverse impact upon the identified sites, habitats and species will only be permitted where it is judged that the merits of the development outweigh any likely environmental damage. The policy

also sets out a requirement for appropriate mitigation and compensation measures where development would cause harm to biodiversity interests.

273. Policy CP21 (Biodiversity) of the [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#) seeks to maintain and enhance the District's biodiversity.
274. The application is supported by an **Ecological Impact Assessment**. This confirms that the existing reedbeds will be retained whilst an area of the scrub along the northern section of the site will be cut back to enable the gas export pipe to be laid. It also identifies that the gas connection pipeline and associated control kiosk would require removal of scrub / grassland in the eastern part of the site.
275. No adverse impact is anticipated with regard to on the nearby designated sites such as East Hampshire Hangers SAC and Upper Greensand Hangers: Wyck to Wheatley SSSI located 3.7km to south-east of the site and a number of locally designated nature conservation sites such as Ancient Woodland and SINC's located as close as 700m to the application site.
276. In relation to air quality impacts, it is noted that the contribution from the proposed development is less than 1% of the long-term Critical Level and less than 10% of the short-term Critical Level for all ecological receptors. In addition, the contribution from the proposal is below 1% of the relevant Critical Loads for nitrogen and acid deposition at all ecologically designated sites. Therefore, the impact of the proposed development at ecological sites can be screened out as 'insignificant'.
277. Dust and water quality impacts and any associated ecological impacts during the construction phase should be dealt with an appropriate Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). It is recommended that this is secured via a pre-commencement Planning Condition, as set out in **Appendix A**.
278. Concerns have been raised in respect of potential pollution to local groundwater sources during the construction process and through potential harm to the Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA) as result of increased nitrates that might be generated should crops be used as a food source for the AD process rather than food waste. However, these issues can be addressed through the proposed planning condition requiring the submission of a CEMP controlling the extent of pollution during the construction process and restricting the source of feedstock for the AD process to household and commercial waste.
279. The River Wey is located approximately 130m south of the site. Whilst this habitat lacks any statutory or non-statutory designations, it is considered to be a notable habitat. Surface water generated from hardstanding areas

subject to potential major contaminant spillages will continue to drain as per the existing drainage arrangements, i.e. to the exiting reed beds via a pumping arrangement.. Any associated drainage matters are covered in [Impact surface or groundwaters and flooding](#).

280. Concerns were raised by the County Ecologist with regard to the relevance of out of date ecology surveys in respect of Great Crested Newts, Reptiles and Dormice. In response , an ecological update technical note (June 2023) has been submitted, which is in part based on a site visit undertaken on site by the applicant's ecologist on the 12<sup>th</sup> April 2023. The report details a number of minor changes since the previous survey work. This report also confirms that the reedbeds on site did not contain sufficient water for an **updated eDNA survey** for great crested newts. It also provides further information in relation to the extent of habitat impact on reptiles and clarifies the mitigation strategy which is acceptable. Information is also provided in relation to the extent of pruning and scrub clearance, along with the extent of native scrub planting on site to minimise impacts and enhance habitat suitability for dormice on site. As a result of this submission the County Ecologist confirms that these measures are considered to be satisfactory.

281. A Biodiversity Metric has also been submitted as part of the application. Three oak trees are proposed and the predicted BNG will be +7% which is considered to be acceptable as the 10% net gain has not yet become mandatory. No objections to the BNG have been raised. The 10% BNG requirement will also only apply to planning application submitted after the mandatory date.

282. Conditions are recommended in respect of a Construction Environmental Management Plan, restrictions on the use of materials in the AD process, protection of local groundwater sources and included in **Appendix A**. On the basis of the proposed mitigation and planning conditions, the proposal is in accordance with Policy 3 (Protection of habitats and species) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) and Policy CP21 (Biodiversity) of the [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#).

#### Public Access

283. The application seeks to redevelop part of a well-contained established site that has no opportunity for public access. The proposals do not seek to extend the site and the application has no implications in terms of local public rights of way. No objections were received in relation to public access. Informative's are included in **Appendix A** in relation to rights of way matters at the request of the countryside officer.

#### Design and sustainability

284. The [Planning Act 2008](#) places great importance on good design and sustainability. Paragraph 126 of the [NPPF \(2021\)](#) confirms that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and helps create better places in

which to live and work to make development acceptable to communities. Paragraph 130 of the [NPPF \(2021\)](#) requires that planning decisions ensure that developments 'will function well and add to the overall quality of the area; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting'. Paragraph 134 of the [NPPF \(2021\)](#) also advises that permission should be refused for development that is not well designed.

285. Policy 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) protects residents from significant adverse visual impact. In addition, Policy 13 (High-quality design of minerals and waste development) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) requires that waste development should not cause an unacceptable adverse visual impact and should maintain and enhance the distinctive character of the landscape.
286. Policy CP29 (Design) of the [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#) seeks to ensure high quality design in respect of new development.
287. The proposal seeks to redevelop part of an existing facility. The scale and massing of the proposed development is similar to the current building on-site. The proposed development seeks to replace an existing single building with what are a number of smaller buildings. As such, the bulk of development is reduced slightly and the presence of a number of buildings is more appropriate to the rural/agricultural nature of the immediate area.
288. Concerns were raised in relation to the external materials proposed. These include comments made by Councillor Kemp-Gee. These are acknowledged. Whilst the proposed materials are yet to be agreed, and as such will be subject to a condition, the applicants have suggested the colour of the external materials will be dark green. The premise for the choice of dark green is on the basis that the colour is appropriate to an agricultural/rural area. The precise detail of this external colour will be subject to the external materials condition thus providing the opportunity to explore this issue in greater detail and to ensure that the materials chosen will be acceptable. This is considered in more detail in **Appendix A**.
289. In relation to sustainability, the renewable energy potential of the proposed development has already been set out.
290. The AD process also creates digestates as a by-product of the process (45,000 tonnes pa). This digestate is processed on site and stored in digestate tanks prior to the export. Digestates can either be exported for use as a fertilizer direct to arable crops or sent for further processing to provide as compost/fertilizer.

291. The concerns raised about digestate storage and management raised by representations and including comments from Councillor Kemp-Gee are acknowledged. There will be no open storage of digestates on the site and this is restricted by planning condition as set out in **Appendix A**. In addition, it is proposed that a further condition is applied for the submission of a digestate management plan.
292. As part of the design, and as already set out, the application is supported by a **landscaping scheme** which includes replacement shrub planting and three oak trees. This scheme has been found to be acceptable.
293. Further planning conditions are also proposed in respect of external materials and are set out in **Appendix A**.
294. On the basis of the design, proposed mitigation and planning conditions, the proposal is in accordance with Policies 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) and 13 (High-quality design of minerals and waste development) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) as well as Policy CP29 (Design) of the [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#).

#### Cultural and Archaeological Heritage

295. The site is a well contained site and the works are contained within the footprint of an existing building (to be demolished) or land to its immediate north. The scale and massing of proposed development, with the exception of the odour stack are no higher than the existing building.
296. There are a number of listed buildings in the vicinity of the site, the nearest being the Grade II Listed 'Bonham's Milestone' situated approximately 380m due west of the Site on the northern side of the A31 and the Grade II\* Listed 'Bonham's Farmhouse' situated approximately 600m north-west of the Site. A cluster of Grade II Listed buildings, structure and features are situated between 680m and 1km due east of the Site, at and near to Fulling Mill (south of the A31). Other Grade II Listed Buildings situated at Turnpike Cottages are situated approximately 895m to 925m due north-east (north of the A31). The Cuckoo's Corner Roman site, Neatham' and 'Cuckoo's Corner Roman settlement, Neatham', both Scheduled Monuments, are situated approximately 750m due west/south-west of the Site.
297. Paragraph 130 of the [NPPF \(2021\)](#) relates to developments which are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change'. In addition, paragraph 194 of the [NPPF \(2021\)](#) states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Paragraph 194 states that '*any harm to or loss of the*

*significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification'. Paragraph 195 states that 'where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to a designated heritage asset planning permission should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm'. Paragraph 196 states that 'where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use'.*

298. Policy 7 (Conserving the historic environment and heritage assets) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) requires minerals and waste development to protect and, wherever possible, enhance Hampshire's historic environment and heritage assets (designated and non-designated), including their settings unless it is demonstrated that the need for and benefits of the development decisively outweigh these interests.
299. Policy CP30 (Historic Environment) of the of the [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#) seeks to conserve the historic environment of the District.
300. Given the scale of development, as compared to the existing buildings, and the screening afforded by the existing mature vegetation outside the site it is considered that the impact of the proposed development on neighbouring listed buildings is acceptable.
301. The County Archaeologist has been consulted in respect of the application. No objection is raised to the proposed development on the basis that the proposed development would not impact any below ground archaeology as the built footprint would remain within the extent of the site which has been disturbed. No comments were received from the Conservation Officer.
302. The proposal is in accordance with Policy 7 (Conserving the historic environment and heritage assets) of the [HMWP 2013](#) and Policy CP30 (Historic Environment) of the of the [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#).

#### Impact on public health, safety and amenity

303. Paragraph 174 of the [NPPF \(2021\)](#) states that planning decisions should '*contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate*'.

304. In relation to pollution control and associated health issues, Government policy concerning pollution control is most clearly set out within the [NPPF \(2021\)](#) and the [NPPW \(2014\)](#) including its supporting planning practice guidance. Paragraph 185 of the [NPPF \(2021\)](#) states that *'planning decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should: a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life; b) identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation'*.
305. Paragraph 7 of the National Planning Policy for Waste [NPPW \(2014\)](#) requires that Waste Planning consider the likely impact on the local environment and on amenity against the criteria set out in Appendix B and the locational implications of any advice on health from the relevant health bodies. Appendix B includes locational criteria in respect of site suitability to include a requirement to protect water quality with the proximity of a site to vulnerable surface and groundwater or aquifers a material consideration.
306. Paragraph 005 of the [PPGW](#) states that *'planning authorities can ensure that waste is handled in a manner which protects human health and the environment through testing the suitability of proposed sites... against the policies in paragraphs 4 to 7 and the factors in Appendix B of the [National Planning Policy for Waste](#)'*. These include ensuring that suitable planning conditions are put in place and adequate enforcement and monitoring undertaken.
307. Policy 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) requires that any development should not cause adverse public health and safety impacts, and unacceptable adverse amenity impacts. It sets out a number of criteria. Also, any proposal should not cause an unacceptable cumulative impact arising from the interactions between waste developments and other forms of development.
308. Policies CP26 (Water Resources and Quality) and CP27 (Pollution) of the [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#) seeks to protect water quality or ensure that development does not result in pollution that can prejudice the health and safety of communities and their environments.

309. Planning and permitting decisions are separate but closely linked. Planning permission determines if a development is an acceptable use of the land. Permitting determines if an operation can be managed on an ongoing basis to prevent or minimise pollution. The Environment Agency was consulted on the application and raised no objection to the proposal. More information is set out in [Links to Environmental Permitting](#).

*Emissions to the atmosphere:*

310. The application is supported by an **Air Quality Assessment** that seeks to provide a view on dust created during the construction process, an assessment of vehicle movements, process emissions and odour emissions, as follows:

- Construction process - based on the activities to be carried out and the sensitivity of the area the site has been assessed to be of low risk for demolition, earthworks, construction and trackout.
- Vehicle movements - as there is a reduction in vehicle numbers the impact on air quality from road vehicle emissions is deemed to be negligible.
- Process emissions – the existing MRF creates a potential odour source and which is not subject to a current odour management plan. There is therefore the opportunity of placing a condition on any consent in this regard. The AD reception and process building will include an odour abatement system. This will maintain the buildings under a negative pressure using an induced draft (ID) fan.

311. The negative pressure will draw in air from outside the buildings and prevents the egress of potentially odorous air out of the buildings. The ID fan will operate so as to ensure there are three changes of air per hour from within the AD reception and process buildings. The extracted air will then be filtered using an ultra-violet (UV) light and activated carbon system, or equivalent technology. The carbon filter and UV light would remove the majority of odours from the air, and the filtered air is then released to atmosphere via the odour control system stack. This process is collectively called the odour abatement system. The system will ensure that odours are not released fugitively from the AD reception and process buildings.

312. The combustion process releases various pollutants which have the potential to be odorous. Carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide released from combustion are odourless, so do not pose any risk of odour. Although the other pollutants such as oxides of nitrogen, sulphur dioxide and VOCs can be odorous, at the concentrations released and the dispersion of the emissions it is not expected for that odour from the combustion emissions would be detected.

313. The assessment confirms that whilst the AD process creates an odour which will be contained within the AD process and that odour management measures will mitigate potential harm.

314. The proposals also include the provision of an emergency gas flare located to the west of the northern bund. The flare will be used in the event that gas cannot be exported from the site and the CPH engines are not functioning. The flare will burn off excess gas.
315. A further scenario has been identified in the event that the emergency flare cannot burn off excess gas. In that event excess gas will be released into the atmosphere from pressure valves from the fermentation and digestate tanks to avoid over pressurisation. Should gases be released from these pressure valves, they would likely contain methane, hydrogen sulphide, VOCs and be odorous. However, emissions from these sources are only expected to occur under exceptional emergency situations, and therefore will be extremely unlikely and short-term events. In such an event the odours will disperse within 500m from site – the nearest residential property Hawbridge Cottages is some 500m from the odour stack.
316. Little risk of odour is anticipated. Where this does occur it is anticipated that it will disperse within 500m. It is considered that neighbouring properties, to include Hawbridge Cottages are within 500m of the site but not within 500m of the proposed AD tanks/odour stack.
317. A number of consultees have raised concerns over the use of the emergency flare suggesting controls in respect of the frequency use. However, it is difficult to place controls on this frequency of use not least as it is part of an emergency back system so as to ensure that excess gas pressure does not build up within the AD tanks. The imposition of such a condition may well encourage the applicants to release gas into the atmosphere.
318. Discussions have taken place with the applicants in respect of the use of the emergency flare and the release of gas. Whilst the applicants have not set out the anticipated likelihood of the use of the emergency flare or the release of gas into the atmosphere they have pointed out that these are backup systems in the event that gas cannot be exported into the gas network and both CPH engines are not working. The applicants have stated that is an unlikely scenario and if it were to occur then they would slow down or stop the AD process so as to rectify any problems.
319. No comments have been received from the Environmental Health Officer in relation to this aspect of the planning application to date. An update to committee will be made if any comments are received. No other consultees raised objection. Odour management will also be covered by the required Environmental Permit.
320. A condition is included in **Appendix A** in relation to an Odour Management Plan.

321. In the event that national policy or regulations required operators to provide mandatory CO<sub>2</sub> management and removal at a later date, it will be for the applicant to apply for any planning permissions required, at that time, to achieve this.

*Emissions to land:*

322. The proposal includes the provision of five AD tanks and three buffer tanks that process food waste to create biogas and digestate. The proposals do not include the open storage of food waste, at the start of the process or digestates at the end of it. All materials are therefore to be kept within the processing building or within tanks prior to export.

323. All tanks are to be provided within a bunded area designed to ensure that should any of the tanks have a leak then any material discharged from the tank can be contained within that bund so as to ensure that pollution to the immediate area, to include the River Wey, can be adequately contained.

324. There are two bunded areas (northern and southern bunds) but they are connected by a link and so there is, in effect, one large bund. As such, the overall capacity of the bund is 6,252m<sup>3</sup>. The largest tank is 2,712m<sup>3</sup>. The capacity of the bund is therefore 230% the size of the largest tank.

325. There are sealed entry points to the southern bund to enable entrance for maintenance purposes. These gates will only be open to allow for the entry and exit of required machinery. At all other times access and exit from the bund will be via steps.

326. No comments have been received from the Environmental Health Officer in relation to this aspect of the planning application to date. No other consultees raised objection.

327. Litter management measures would be defined within the Environmental Management Plan (EMP), as required by the Environmental Permit, to prevent the release of litter from the facility buildings. It would be expected that this would include measures such as

- Regular inspections of the facility to ensure litter within and adjacent to the facility would be collected and disposed of;
- The waste reception hall would be cleaned daily to ensure that material that could attract rodents or other pests does not accumulate;
- All vehicles carrying waste to the Site would be adequately sheeted to ensure that litter will not escape onto the public highway or other areas outside the boundary of the Site.
- All delivery vehicles entering the facility would be inspected by the gatehouse operator to ensure that vehicles are appropriately enclosed.

Measures would be included on what would happen if drivers fail to comply with site regulations.

- All unloading of waste would be undertaken within the enclosed reception hall, which would be controlled under negative air pressure. This would assist in preventing any litter from escaping the building;
- The boundary fencing would help prevent litter from being blown beyond the Site boundary;
- The internal and external boundaries of the facility would be inspected daily, and any litter would be collected and disposed of; and
- Regular inspections of the facility by pest control specialists will take place.

328. Conditions are included in **Appendix A** in relation to litter management. This issues will also be covered fully by the Environmental Permit.

329. A Pest Management Plan will be required as part of the Environmental Permit.

330. Conditions are also recommended in order to ensure that development is carried out in accordance with the submitted plans and that there is adequate capacity within the proposed bunded areas and that doors to the bund are closed at all times other than for essential maintenance or emergencies. These are set out in **Appendix A**. A condition is also included on a digestate management plan.

*Human health:*

331. The proposed development seeks to provide a new AD/WTS on site in place of the existing MRF/WTS facility. As such takes foodwaste and as part of the AD process creates gas, which is then used to generate gas and electricity and heat and digestates.

332. No comments have been received from the Environmental Health Officer in relation to this aspect of the planning application to date. An update to committee will be made if any comments are received.

333. Mitigation measures and planning conditions relating to odour management and air quality are of particular relevance here and are covered in other sections of the commentary.

*Noise and vibration:*

334. The application is supported by a **Noise Impact Assessment (NIA)** which seeks to set out existing day time and night time noise levels near neighbouring residential properties. It then seeks to compare them with anticipated noise levels from the construction process and the operation of the WTS/AD (bearing in mind that the AD process will be active 24/7).

*Construction:*

335. The results indicate that noise generated by peak noise activities during the demolition, movement of soil, infrastructure and plant installation would not be significant and below the guidance threshold. Potential impact in this respect can be mitigated by the application of 'best practicable means' and noise report suggests that the following measures can be employed to control noise generation:

- Restriction of construction hours to non-sensitive times of day would normally form part of the planning consent conditions.
- All construction plant and equipment will comply with EU noise emission limits.
- Plant will be serviced regularly to minimise adverse noise impacts.
- All vehicles and mechanical plant used for the purpose of the works will be fitted with effective exhaust silencers and where practicable acoustic enclosures/hoods and maintained in good efficient working order.
- Machines in intermittent use will be shut down in the intervening periods between work or throttled down to a minimum.
- Materials will be handled with care and be placed (e.g. not dropped into skips or lorries or dropped onto metal surfaces).
- Mobile plant to be fitted with non-tonal reversing alarms i.e. broadband type noise reversing alarms used (e.g. 'squawker' type) not 'beeper' type or use of a banksman or use of visual alarm subject to health and safety approval.
- Community Relations – "It is suggested that good relations can be developed by keeping people informed of progress and by treating complaints fairly and expeditiously. The person, company or organisation carrying out the work on site should appoint a responsible person to liaise with the public."

336. The **NIA** also addresses the issue of potential vibration during the construction process and concludes that the separation distances from the site to neighbouring residents would mean that nuisance in this regard would be negligible.

*Operational noise:*

337. The NIA seeks to set out the highest likely noise prediction with regard to fixed and mobile plant noise sources during both the daytime and night-time periods. The report confirms that noise levels will be lower than the background noise levels and so impact on neighbouring residential amenities will be acceptable to include during overnight.

*Emergency flare noise:*

338. Should the emergency flare be used overnight the anticipated noise levels would be lower than the background noise levels with the exception of Bonham Farm where the predicted noise level will be 2dB higher – 34dB would be anticipated. This is acceptable given that the threshold guidelines for bedroom levels during night-time periods to protect from sleep disturbance is 40dB.

339. No comments have been received from the Environmental Health Officer in relation to this aspect of the planning application to date. An update to committee will be made if any comments are received.

340. Conditions are recommended in respect of noise and vibration control and these are included in **Appendix A**.

*Lighting:*

341. The whole of the national park is a designated [International Dark Sky Reserve](#) and potential impact in this regard is a material planning consideration.

342. There are no restrictions on the hours of operation of existing MRF/WTS. The existing MRF/WTS does not operate 24/7, it will in the winter period have a need for external lighting during some hours of darkness. The **Planning Statement** confirms that there are to be no additional lighting on-site over and above that on-site at the present time.

343. The AD facility will operate on a continual basis and during the winter period the WTS will operate during hours of darkness. The application therefore identifies a need for external lighting to the site during hours of darkness. Given the operation is required to operate 24 hours an hour, it is reasonable to assume that there will be some minor additional lighting at night. Overnight there will be two members of site and it is likely that at times they will need to access the whole of the site resulting in a need for lighting.

344. No specific lighting details have been submitted as part of the development proposals. However, the applicants have indicated that there will be no need to additional lighting over and above the current arrangements. The planning statement confirms that all non-essential lighting will be turned off during hours of darkness.

345. No comments have been received from the Environmental Health Officer in relation to this aspect of the planning application to date. An update to committee will be made if any comments are received.

346. In order to mitigate harm in this regard a condition is included in the recommendation requiring the submission of a lighting strategy confirming that light pollution will be minimised and restricted to an acceptable level. This included in **Appendix A**. This will address issues to include the location and luminance of any additional lighting on-site requiring all non-essential lighting to be turned off outside specified working hours and that lighting be directed so that it minimise light input above the horizontal.

*Public Infrastructure:*

347. Due to the close proximity of the proposed development to Network Rail's land and the operational railway, Network Rail has requested that the applicant engages Network Rail's Asset Protection and Optimisation (ASPRO) team prior to works commencing. This is included as an informative.
348. Taking all matters into account, on the basis of the mitigation and conditions, the proposal is in accordance with Policy 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) and Policies CP26 (Water Resources and Quality) and CP27 (Pollution) of the [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#).

#### Impact surface or groundwaters and flooding

##### a) *Surface and groundwaters:*

349. Policy 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) states that minerals and waste development should not cause adverse public health and safety impacts, and unacceptable adverse amenity impacts. This includes not releasing emissions to water (above appropriate standards).
350. Policies CP25 (Flood risk), CP26 (Water Resources and Quality) and CP27 (Pollution) of the [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#) seeks to prevent flooding and protect water quality or ensure that development does not result in pollution that can prejudice the health and safety of communities and their environments.
351. The **Planning Statement** and **Groundwater Risk Assessment** sets out how risks of pollution to the River Wey can be mitigated. All AD tanks are to be sunk into the ground by 1m and accommodated within a bund, the base of the which will be constructed from 1m thick reinforced concrete and will provide impermeable containment. The bund base and walls will be designed as a liquid-retaining structure in accordance with BS EN 1992-1-1:2004. This bunding is intended to accommodate at least 110% of the capacity of the largest AD tank thereby containing waste products in the event of a leak from one of the tanks.
352. Whilst there are two bunds on site they are linked by a underground pipe which in effect means that there is in effect one large bund with a capacity of 6,252m<sup>3</sup>. Given that the cubic capacity of the largest tank on site will be 2,752m<sup>3</sup> this means that there will be some 252% containment capacity within the bund in the event of a leak.
353. In respect of rainwater during operation of the facility any rainwater falling on existing hard surfaced areas will drain via the existing drainage system and filtered through the reed beds that are located in the eastern portion of the site. Rainwater that falls into the bunded area will be collected and routed into the AD process. In times of excessive rainfall the following three options will be pursued:

- removed by vacuum tanker and taken off-site, or;
  - tested for contaminants and, if acceptable, pumped into the infiltration drainage system (subject to EA permit acceptance criteria) or;
  - pumped at a rate which would allow input back into the AD process.
354. Whilst there are two separate bunds (northern and southern bunds) they are connected by a culverted bund link (and so in effect are one bund). The bunds are to be sunk 1m below ground level and surrounded by a 1.8 high wall. The bunds will contain 5 fermentation/digestion tanks, each of which have a capacity of 2,712m<sup>3</sup> (13,560m<sup>3</sup> overall). In addition, there are three smaller buffer tanks that have a combined capacity of 1,506m<sup>3</sup>. There is therefore the capacity to store up to 15,066m<sup>3</sup> on-site. The combined capacity of the two bunds is 6,252m<sup>3</sup> (i.e. 3,777m<sup>3</sup> for the southern bund and 2,475m<sup>3</sup> at the northern bund). Given that the largest tank is 2,475m<sup>3</sup> the bund amounts to 252% the size of the largest tank.
355. The base of the bund will be constructed from 1m thick reinforced concrete and will provide impermeable containment. The bund base and walls will be designed as a liquid-retaining structure in accordance with BS EN 1992-1-111.
356. The southern bund has access doors for maintenance purposes. They will only be opened for specific purposes, for example, to allow for access and exit of relevant machinery, and properly manned. In the event of a leak from one of the tanks whilst they doors are open these doors can be readily closed so as to prevent leakage.
357. The River Wey is located approximately 130m south of the site. Whilst this habitat lacks any statutory or non-statutory designations, it is considered to be a notable habitat. Surface water generated from hardstanding areas subject to potential major contaminant spillages will continue to drain as per the existing drainage arrangements, i.e. to the exiting reed beds via a pumping arrangement. It is proposed to continue to infiltrate surface water runoff generated by hardstanding areas not subject to major contaminated spillages in line with existing runoff and infiltration arrangements.
358. Rainwater that falls within the bunded areas will be used as part of the AD process. In the event of excess rainwater it will either be transported off-site or tested for contaminants and if appropriate fed into the reed bed system.
359. Natural England has been consulted in respect of the scheme and has raised concerns with regard to impact on the Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA) in respect of nitrates, harm to species and habitats during the construction process and potential pollution to local ground water sources and to the River Wey. As already noted, Natural England suggested that a condition requiring that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) be submitted so as to prevent

pollution affecting the water quality of the River Wey. This is included in **Appendix A**.

360. A number of local residents also have raised concerns that the applicants may elect to use purpose grown crops for the AD process. The application has been submitted as a food waste recovery facility rather than being developed to process 'energy crops' such as maize. The applicant has confirmed that the 'predominant material that would be managed at the proposed AD facility would be food waste derived from domestic or commercial sources'.
361. Concerns would be raised if the facility were to be used to process purpose grown crops not least due to the potential impact, without appropriate mitigation, on the integrity of the Solent designated sites, including the Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA). To use purpose grown crops, within relatively close proximity to Solent river catchments, could result in a more intense land use might have a more significant challenge in achieving nutrient neutrality.
362. Natural England has raised concerns that the use of such crops in the AD process will potentially lead to additional nitrates, phosphates and sediment entering Solent and thereby harm local biodiversity. Natural England has therefore recommended that the range of materials to be managed at the site are secured by way of an appropriately worded condition to support the intended use of the AD plant, thereby negating the need for further information and evidencing of potential for driving land use change to more nutrient intensive land uses.
363. The Environment Agency notes that this site is on a secondary A aquifer, above Principal aquifer bedrock (Chalk). Groundwater is predicted to be shallow and sensitive and vulnerable, at around 3 m bgl, with the potential for even shallower perched water in the River Terrace Deposits. As a result, the EA requested more information about the risks to groundwater from these tanks which would sit around only 1 m above groundwater in the form of a groundwater risk assessment and proposed control and mitigations.
364. In addition, further information was requested in respect of the sampling of rainwater that will fall within the sunken AD areas and that would be pump into the surrounding drainage system. Concerns were raised in respect of frequency of testing, the definition of contaminated water and how to mitigate.
365. The **Groundwater Risk Assessment** (May 2023) confirms that rainwater collected within the bund area will be routed into the buffer tanks and fed into the AD process. In periods of excess rain this rainwater will be either taken off-site, tested for contaminants of fed into the infiltration drainage system

(subject to EA permit acceptance criteria) or pumped at a rate which would allow input back into the AD process. Surface water generated from hardstanding areas will continue to drain as per the existing drainage arrangements (i.e., infiltration and drainage to the existing reed beds via a pumping arrangement).

366. In response to the revised Groundwater Risk Assessment the EA raises no objections to the application subject to conditions that control the provision of surface water drainage systems, a remediation strategy in respect of contamination risks, a verification respect of the remediation strategy and a remediation strategy in respect of unsuspected contamination. These are included in **Appendix A**.
367. The Local Lead Flood Authority note that no winter groundwater monitoring has been undertaken. Groundwater inflow was recorded at 1.2 metres below ground level Soakaway testing was completed in one pit at the eastern end of the site. This may not be representative for the soakaways proposed in the west of the site, considering that one pit was dug and not used for testing in a more central location due to the non-natural soils found there. It should be considered that the existing soakaways are not suitable for draining the new development, especially considering the lack of information regarding their age and condition. As such, the LLFA requested additional information in respect of winter groundwater monitoring and representative infiltration testing results and updated water treatment and maintenance information in accordance with best practice. In response to the revised Groundwater Risk Assessment the LLFA raises no objections to the application subject to conditions requiring the submission of detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site. These conditions are included in **Appendix A**.

*b) Flooding:*

368. Whilst the site is not located in an area of flood risk it is located on an aquifer and within 130m of the River Wey which is a chalkstream. Potential impact on this area is a material consideration in respect of the application.
369. Policy 11 (Flood risk and prevention) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) relates to minerals and waste development in flood risk areas and sets criteria which developments should be consistent with relating to flood risk offsite, flood protection, flood resilience and resistance measures, design of drainage, net surface water run-off and Sustainable Drainage Systems.
370. Policy CP25 (Flood risk) of the [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#) seeks to mitigate flood risk on sites.
371. The Lead Local Flood Authority note that the site is brownfield, within Flood Zone 1 and generally at very low risk of flooding from surface water. The

existing development drains to soakaways, except where there is a significant pollution risk and runoff from these areas is pumped to a reed bed system. The drainage strategy is to utilise the existing system for an equivalent impermeable area post-development. As a result, the LLFA requested details of a revised drainage system proposal that can accommodate the 1 in 30 year event plus climate change allowance without flooding. A Groundwater Risk Assessment was submitted in response to the revised Groundwater Risk Assessment, the LLFA recommend that a condition in respect of requiring sufficient attenuation for storm events up to and including 1:100 + climate change with no flooding shown at the 1:30 storm event. This is set out in **Appendix A**.

372. On the basis of the proposed mitigation and planning conditions, the proposal is in accordance with Policy 11 (Flood risk and prevention) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) and Policies CP25 (Flood risk), CP26 (Water Resources and Quality) and CP27 (Pollution) of the [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#).

#### Links to Environmental Permitting

373. National Planning Practice Guidance states that Planning Authorities should assume that other regulatory regimes will operate effectively rather than seek to control any processes, health and safety issues or emissions themselves where these are subject to approval under other regimes ([Paragraph 050 Reference ID: 28-050-20141016](#))
374. Planning and permitting decisions are separate but closely linked. The Environment Agency has a role to play in both.
375. Planning permission determines if a development is an acceptable use of the land. Permitting determines if an operation can be managed on an ongoing basis to prevent or minimise pollution.
376. The need for an environmental permit is separate to the need for planning permission. The granting of planning permission does not necessarily lead to the granting of an Environmental Permit. An application for an Environmental Permit will include an assessment of the environmental risk of the proposals including the risk under both normal and abnormal operating conditions. The Environment Agency will assess the application and the adequacy of the impact assessment including whether the control measures proposed by the operator are appropriate for mitigating the risks and their potential impact.
377. It is not appropriate for the planning process to condition operational issues which relate to the jurisdiction of the environmental permit. Paragraph 050 of the [NPPG](#) states that Planning Authorities should assume that other regulatory regimes will operate effectively rather than seek to control any processes, health and safety issues or emissions themselves where these are subject to approval under other regimes.

378. The waste disposal element of the development will require an Environment Permit / a variation of the existing permit from the Environment Agency. The permit will cover a range of issues such as litter management and vermin control.
379. The scope of an Environmental Permit is defined by the activities set out in the Environmental Permitting Regulations (England and Wales) 2016 (EPR). The aim of the EPR regime is to protect the environment from potential impacts associated with certain liable facilities or installations. The permitted activities may form a part of, but not all, of the development needing planning permission. In these cases, the planning application will need to address environmental considerations from those parts of the development that are not covered by the permit.
380. The Environment Agency carry out unannounced inspection visits to ensure sites are operating in accordance with permit conditions and scrutinise data associated with the development. The Environment Agency has the powers to suspend any permits it considers are not being fully complied with and are creating an unacceptable risk.
381. The proposed facility is acceptable in terms of planning. Should a new or revised permit be granted for the operation, it will be monitored and enforced in the same manner as any other regulated site by the Environment Agency. Several mechanisms are put in place to monitor to ensure compliance such as audits, site visits, data analysis and compliance checks are carried out by the regulator.

#### Highways impact

382. Paragraph 110 of the [NPPF \(2021\)](#) advises that '*when assessing planning applications opportunities should be taken to promote sustainable transport modes, ensure development sites have safe and suitable access for all users and where there are any significant impacts on the transport network in terms of capacity, congestion or highway safety these should be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree*'. In addition, paragraph 111 of the [NPPF \(2021\)](#) states that '*development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.*' Within this context, applications for development should:
- a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;
  - b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;
  - c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design

standards; d) allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and e) be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.

383. Policy 12 (Managing traffic) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) requires minerals and waste development to have a safe and suitable access to the highway network and where possible minimise the impact of its generated traffic through the use of alternative methods of transportation. It also requires highway improvements to mitigate any significant adverse effects on highway safety, pedestrian safety, highway capacity and environment and amenity.

384. Policy CP31 (Transport) of the [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#) seeks to ensure that new development is located so as to reduce the need to travel.

*a) Access:*

385. The site is located on the A31 and currently serves the existing MRF/WTS. Access arrangements will be unchanged and all traffic, to include HGV traffic, will continue to use the A31 to both access and exit the site. With regard to HGV movements the TA states that for the period 2016-2019 there were an average of 126 two-way HGV trips per day associated with the existing MRF/WTS. The proposed development anticipates some 113 two-way HGV movements per day. These HGV movements will include those transporting digestates off-site.

*b) HGV movements:*

386. It is anticipated that of the waste received at the AD plant, approximately 10% would contain reject items which could not be processed at the facility. These rejects would be taken to an alternative waste management resource, appropriate for that type of waste.

387. The facility therefore anticipates some 50,000 tonnes of organic waste to be delivered to the site on an annual basis. This would comprise some 30.4 HGV one-way movements per day.

388. Some 10% (5,000 tonnes pa) will be rejected as a result of the screening process and transferred to alternative sites. The remainder (45,000 tonnes per year) will comprise digestates – the combined daily HGV one way movements for rejects/digestates will be 12.5.

389. Concerns have been raised by consultees that HGV's taking digestates from site are more likely to use the local road network. This would be relevant if, for example, digestates are being delivered to local farms with the consequence that local residential amenities could be harmed. In response a

condition is recommended requiring the submission and adherence to a digestate routing plan that can control such vehicular movements.

390. In addition, the WTS will generate 13.5 one way movements. Overall this will result in 56.4 one way movements – 112.8 two way movements in total.
391. The TA confirms that as a result of the proposed development that to include removal of digestates from the site that there will be a total of 113 HGV movements per day (of which 23 HGV movements per day relate to digestates). The current use generates 125 HGV trips – an overall reduction of 12 two-way HGV trips.
392. There would also be 12 members of staff on site per day and on average 0.5 visitors per day giving rise to an additional 25 daily two-way car / light vehicle trips. The proposed combined AD facility and WTS will therefore generate a maximum combined daily total of 138 two-way HGV and light vehicle movements (69 in and 69 out).
393. The existing MRF/WTS currently accommodates 150,000tonnes per annum. The proposed use anticipates 70.000tpa. As such, there is a reduction in HGV movements to and from the site. The existing MRF/WTS generates 126 two-way HGV movements and the proposed AD/WTS use anticipates 113 – an overall reduction of 13 daily two way movements.
394. The proposed use also looks to reduce the numbers of staff on site – from the existing use of 95 to a proposed 16. Staff/visitor vehicular movements will therefore reduce from 101 to 25 as a result of the proposed use.
395. Overall the impact on the local highway network will be reduced as a result of the proposed development and all traffic will still be required to use the A31.

*c) Highways safety*

396. Personal Injury Accident (PIA) data taken from the Department for Transport (DfT) for the period from 2019 to 2021 has been considered within the **TS**. The study area extends from the A31 / Montecchio (B3004) roundabout to the Islington Lane / A31 slip roads.
397. It is stated that a total of 11 accidents were recorded within the study area between 2019 and 2021 with 8 of these accidents classified as ‘slight’ and the other 3 classified as ‘serious’. It is also noted that there were no ‘fatal’ accidents on the road. Accidents in the study area comprise the following:
- 3 accidents on the approaches to the Montecchio Way roundabout;
  - 5 accidents on the A31 carriageway, north of the site, (4 northbound and 1 southbound), all in different locations; and
  - 3 accidents around the crossing point near the Hen and Chicken Inn (1 of these being serious and 2 being slight).

398. The data provided is not as accurate as data provided directly by Hampshire Constabulary and therefore additional data for the latest 5 years has been obtained from this source. This has confirmed that, as noted on a recent site visit there was a fatal accident in September 2022 involving a cyclist opposite the site egress. The full details of this accident are not likely to be known prior to a planning decision being made but it is understood that HGVs were not involved.
399. The accident record has not identified any patterns that are likely to be exacerbated by this application.
400. The County Highway Officer has responded in respect of the application and noted that there is a net reduction in HGV vehicular movements associated with the proposed development and the proposal will not represent a material impact on the safety or capacity of the A31. No objection was raised subject to conditions in respect of a Construction Management Plan and routing plans (through a S106 agreement).

*d) Routing*

401. The **TA** confirms that the deliveries of organic waste will be from Transfer Stations from the following sites within Hampshire:

- Rushmoor;
- Basingstoke and Deane;
- Hart;
- Portsmouth;
- Gosport;
- Fareham;
- Havant; and
- East Hampshire

402. In addition, Southampton, Otterbourne or Andover TS could also deliver to the site. Supplementary third party bulked organics and/or liquid would also be delivered to the site.

403. The County Highway Officer has responded in respect of the application and raised no objection subject to routing plans for both construction and operational traffic (which will be secured by a S106 agreement. A legal agreement is proposed to continue to existing routing arrangements.

*e) Sustainable transport*

404. There is limited opportunity to enhance sustainable transport options for the site by reason of its location on the A31 and there are no other accesses to the site. Employees there have little option other than to use the motor vehicle to access the site.

405. The reduction in employee numbers on site (there will be a maximum of 6 staff on site at any one time there is limited options, for example, for car sharing).
406. Local consultees have requested that cycle lanes could be introduced to the A31. In response, it should be noted the proposals look to reduce staff vehicular movements and it is considered unreasonable to require such provision. In addition, there are questions with regard to the desirability of providing a cycle lane on the A31 particularly for a limited distance. A condition relating to staff travel plan has been included in **Appendix A**.

*f) Construction:*

407. The construction period is anticipated to take approximately 18 months with the timing dependent on the construction and commissioning of the new MRF at Chickenhall Lane. Construction will be during the hours of 7am to 7pm, Mondays to Saturdays.
408. The County Highway Officer has responded in respect of the application and noted that there is a net reduction in HGV vehicular movements associated with the proposed development and the proposal will not represent a material impact on the safety or capacity of the A31. No objection was raised subject to conditions in respect of a Construction Management Plan and routing plans for construction and operational traffic. This is included in **Appendix A**.
409. On the basis of the proposed planning conditions and legal agreement, the proposal is in accordance with Policy 12 (Managing traffic) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) and Policy CP31 (Transport) of the [EHSDJCS \(2014\)](#).

Restoration

410. Policy 9 (Restoration of minerals and waste developments) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) requires temporary minerals and waste development to be restored to beneficial after-uses consistent with the development plan. Restoration of minerals and waste developments should be in keeping with the character and setting of the local area, and should contribute to the delivery of local objectives for habitats, biodiversity or community use where these are consistent with the development plan. It also indicates that restoration of mineral extraction and landfill sites should be phased throughout the life of the development.
411. A condition is included for the reinstatement of the site should the proposed uses cease. This is included in **Appendix A**. On this basis, the proposal is

in accordance with Policy 9 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#).

#### Socio-economic impacts

412. Paragraph 7 of the [NPPF \(2021\)](#) states that achieving sustainable development is the primary objective of the planning system, with paragraph 8 confirming the importance that the economic role of development has in delivering sustainable development. Further to this, the [NPPF \(2021\)](#) incorporates planning policy in relation to the socio economic effects of development. Specifically, paragraph 81 of the [NPPF \(2021\)](#) states that: *'Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development'*.
413. For waste sites, this is built on by paragraph 4.38 of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) which acknowledges that appropriately managed 'waste development (are) important to support employment and provision of services in rural areas (including more sustainable energy supplies).
414. The applicants are pursuing the scheme not least to meet the requirements of the [Environment Act \(2021\)](#) which introduced a legislative commitment for waste collection authorities to introduce separate weekly food waste collection. The site has been chosen not least due to the fact that it is being replaced by the proposed MRF at [Chickenhall Lane Eastleigh](#) and is therefore available for redevelopment.
415. The current staffing levels on-site are some 95 employees with a maximum of 50 staff on-site at any one time. The proposed development will only require 16 staff, with a maximum of 6 staff on-site at any one time. There will therefore be a significant reduction in staff employed on site.

#### Monitoring and enforcement

416. As an operational waste site, the site is subject to regular monitoring by the Councils Monitoring and Enforcement team to ensure compliance with previous permissions granted. If permission were granted, the Site would be inspected by officers in the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority's Monitoring and Enforcement team to ensure compliance with any permission granted.
417. Two complaints have been received, in 2021, in respect of lorry routing.
418. The Environment Agency would also inspect the Site as part of monitoring the Environmental Permit. The Environment Agency has the powers to

suspend any permits it considers are not being fully complied with and are creating an unacceptable risk.

#### Other matters

419. The management of any construction, demolition and excavation wastes generated through the redevelopment of the site is covered by the proposed planning condition on the submission of a construction and environmental management plan (as set out in **Appendix A**).

#### Non-material planning issues raised in representations

420. A number of representations have raised concerns as part of the planning process which although acknowledged, are not material to the planning process. These include the following matters.

##### *Previous operator performance and enforcement:*

421. Concerns have been raised over the lack of landscaping provided for the MRF and that compensatory landscaping should be provided. In response, it should be noted that the proposed development seeks to replace existing buildings on site with buildings and structures that are comparable in scale. The Landscape Visual Impact Assessment confirms that the effects of the proposals on the wider area are not significant. The County Landscape Architect agrees with this conclusion. As such it is clear that the proposed landscaping scheme is appropriate for the site.

##### *Compensation to the local authority in respect of the loss of jobs:*

422. The proposal results in the loss of 79 jobs on site. This is not a material planning consideration in this instance. The existing MRF use is to be replaced by a new facility in Chickenhall Lane Eastleigh and the proposals seek a suitable alternative use on site.

#### Planning conditions

423. A number of conditions are proposed in order to mitigate the potential impact of the development on the wider area. These include conditions relating to the construction process to ensure that the wider area is protected from harm through pollution to include that of groundwater, noise and vibration and the local highway network. They also refer to the operational development and include mitigation of visual impact through landscaping, odour controls to protect local residential amenities and measures to ensure pollution is avoided.

#### Legal agreement

424. A legal agreement is proposed that seeks to control vehicular movements on the A31.. This continues the current legal agreement arrangement through the grant of previous planning permissions at the site.

425. Some representations raised the need for a liaison panel within the s106. The establishment of a panel, as already noted, covered by an informative.
426. Litter management outside of the site was also raised as an area for the legal agreement. Litter management measures are already included in the application and this is also covered is a matter for the Environmental Permit. On site litter controls already take place on site and will continue.
427. Some representations have also requested the legal agreement covers the provision of a segregated cycle lane. There has been no requirements set out by the Local Highway Authority on this matter.

### Community benefits

428. A frequent concern of communities that host minerals and waste developments is that there are no immediate benefits to 'compensate' for the inconvenience that occurs. Policy 14 (Community Benefits) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) encourages negotiated agreements between relevant minerals and waste developers/operators and a community as a source of funding for local benefits. These benefit packages can comprise bilateral arrangements between the main parties. Agreements can be between operators and local bodies such as Parish Councils or resident's associations. Whilst the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority encourages these agreements, it cannot be party to such agreements and the agreements cannot be considered in decision making.
429. Paragraph 5.59 of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) states that there is an expectation that all 'major' minerals and waste development will be accompanied by a site Liaison Panel. Panels should be setup between the site operator, Minerals and Waste Planning Authority, other interested parties and community representatives to facilitate effective engagement with stakeholders in the interests of promoting communication between the site operator and local community.
430. Paragraph 5.59 of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#) states that there is an expectation that all 'major' minerals and waste development will be accompanied by a site Liaison Panel. An informative note to applicant is included in **Appendix A** on the establishment of a liaison panel for the Site if permission were to be granted in the interests of promoting communication between the site operator and local community. This should be established and sit before the commencement of construction works. The earliest engagement is encouraged by the Waste Planning Authority.

### **Conclusions**

431. The proposed development seeks to build an anaerobic digestion facility and waste transfer station on-site. The fact that there is an existing MRF/WTS on-site is a material consideration in respect of the application.
432. In accordance with section 38 of the [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#) and relevant national policy, the decision on this application should be taken in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. There are a large number of relevant development plan policies which have been reviewed and assessed as part of the process of coming to a recommendation. All relevant policies need to be considered and a balance needs to be made on the suitability of the proposal.
433. As such, consideration should be given to the impact of the proposed development in comparison with the existing use. In this respect the proposals seek to replace one safeguarded use (i.e. the MRF/WTS) with another (i.e. the AD/WTS) and the principle of development is therefore acceptable in this regard.
434. The application has also been submitted in response to the requirement under the S57 of the [Environment Act 2021](#) for separate collection of residential and commercial food waste and its subsequent diversion from landfill. This will increase the amount of food waste which requires management in Hampshire, helping to meet the minimum requirements for waste management as set out under Policy 27 of the [HMWP 2013](#). The AD facility will therefore divert up to 50,000 tpa (i.e. 45,000 tpa food waste and 5,000tpa of rejected waste, which will then be recycled) from landfill.
435. The proposal seeks to make a contribution toward renewable energy and will provide gas into the gas grid and the option of electricity to the national grid. In addition, the site will be self-sufficient in respect of power and heat meeting the requirements of Policy 28 of the [HMWP 2013](#).
436. The AD process will create up to 45,000 tpa of digestate which can be used on agricultural land as a fertilizer.
437. All the proposed buildings, with the exception of the odour stack will be lower, in height, than the existing building (the odour stack will be 3.8m higher) and are considered to be acceptable in terms of design and visual impacts, meeting the requirements of Policies 10 and 13 of the [HMWP 2013](#).
438. It is noted that there are limited opportunities on-site to provide additional planting due to on-site constraints. The application is supported by a landscape scheme that provides additional mitigation and what has been

proposed is considered to be acceptable in accordance with the scale of the development.

439. No alterations to the access arrangements and as such all traffic will have to use the A31 to enter and leave the site. The use of this road and other parts of the strategic highway network to deliver waste to the site will be secured by a legal agreement. The site highway movements will reduce compared to existing HGV movements and are considered to be acceptable, with conditions and a legal agreement from highway safety and capacity perspectives, meeting this requirements of Policy 12 of the [HMWP 2013](#).
440. Careful consideration has be given to issues to include potential impact on human health, odour management, light pollution, air and water quality. It is considered that these can be mitigated by condition, meeting the requirements of Policy 10 of the [HMWP 2013](#).
441. Taking all these matters into account, on balance the proposal, subject to the conditions proposed and associated section 106 agreement, is on the whole considered to be a sustainable waste management development in accordance with paragraph 11 of the [NPPF \(2021\)](#) and Policy 1 (Sustainable minerals and waste development) of the [HMWP \(2013\)](#).
442. It is therefore concluded that, on balance, that planning permission be GRANTED subject to the conditions listed in **Appendix A** and completion of a section 106 agreement to secure Heavy Goods Vehicle routing.

### **Recommendation**

443. That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the conditions listed in Appendix A and completion of a section 106 agreement to secure restrictions to prevent HGV U turns on the A31 at Froyle.

Appendices:

- Appendix A – Conditions
- Appendix B – Committee Plan
- Appendix C – Site context plan
- Appendix D – Site Layout Plan
- Appendix E – Proposed Elevations
- Appendix F – Existing Elevations
- Appendix G – Aerial Photograph

Other documents relating to this application:

<https://planning.hants.gov.uk/Planning/Display/HCC/2023/0057>

**REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:**

**Links to the Strategic Plan**

<b>Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:</b>	No
<b>People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:</b>	No
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:</b>	No
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:</b>	No

**OR**

**This proposal does not link to the Strategic Plan but, nevertheless, requires a decision because:**

the proposal is an application for planning permission and requires determination by the County Council in its statutory role as the minerals and waste or local planning authority.

**Other Significant Links**

**Links to previous Member decisions:**

<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

**Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives**

<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

**The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)**

Document

Location

33619/008  
EH141

Hampshire County Council

Development of an anaerobic digestion facility and waste transfer station, including partial demolition and reuse of existing buildings and infrastructure at Alton Materials Recovery Facility, A31 Alton GU34 4JD

## **EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:**

### **1. Equality Duty**

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

Officers considered the information provided by the applicant, together with the response from consultees and other parties, and determined that the proposal would have no material impact on individuals or identifiable groups with protected characteristics. Accordingly, no changes to the proposal were required to make it acceptable in this regard.

## **CONDITIONS**

### **Reasons for Approval**

It is considered that proposed development is acceptable in accordance with the relevant policies of the development plan. The proposal provides for a sustainable form of waste development that diverts food waste from landfill and the Anaerobic Digestion process use this waste to create energy in the form of gas, electricity and heat (Policies 25 and 27 of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (HMWP)). The proposal seeks to redevelop an existing safeguarded site (Policy 26 of the HMWP (2013)) that has the existing infrastructure for waste development and does not have a significant effect in terms of visual or amenity impact (Policy 10 of the HMWP (2013) and Policy CP27 – Pollution of the of East Hampshire and South Downs Joint Core Strategy (2014) (EHSDJCS) and is acceptable from a highway safety perspective (Policy 12 of the HMWP (2013) and Policy CP31 – Transport of the HMWP (2013)). The proposal is acceptable in relation to ecology (Policy 3 of the HMWP (2013) and Policy CP21 of the EHSDJCS (2014)). The proposal also creates renewable energy (Policies 2 and 28 of the HMWP (2013)). The proposal provides the opportunity to place conditions on any consent in order to mitigate impact in respect of impact on the wider area to include protection of local groundwater, neighbouring residential properties, the neighbouring highway network, digestate management and on the character of the area. Taking all matters into account, on balance, the proposal is therefore considered to be sustainable in accordance with paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), Policy 1 (Sustainable minerals and waste development) of the HMWP (2013) and Policy CP1, Presumption in favour of sustainable development of the EHSDJCS (2014).

### **Conditions**

#### **Commencement of development**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 (as amended) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

#### **Pre commencement**

2. The operator shall notify the Waste Planning Authority of the date of the commencement of demolition of the existing Materials Recovery Facility/

Waste Transfer Station at least 7 days prior to commencement of demolition.

The operator shall notify the Waste Planning Authority of the date of the commencement of demolition of the existing Materials Recovery Facility/ Waste Transfer Station at least 7 days prior to commencement of demolition.

3. The operator shall notify the Waste Planning Authority of the date of the material start of each phase of development in writing at least 7 days, prior to each phase commencing.

The phases of development shall comprise:

- a) commencement of demolition of the existing Materials Recovery Facility/ Waste Transfer Station;
- b) the commencement of construction; and
- c) the date when the development will become fully operational (“fully operational” is defined as the point from which it has been demonstrated that the development operates in accordance with its specified performance once the commissioning trials have been successfully completed).

Reason: To enable the Waste Planning Authority to monitor compliance with the conditions of the planning permission.

4. No development shall commence, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Environmental and Traffic Management Plan has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Waste Planning Authority.

The Plan shall include:

1. An indicative programme for carrying out of the works;
2. Details of site preparation works (prior to construction);
3. Measures to minimise the noise (including vibration) generated by the demolition and construction process setting out the use of best practice;
4. Measures to mitigate and minimise noise during the construction phase and to include:
  - identification of the methodology and frequency of noise measurement
  - the selection of plant, equipment and machinery to be installed / constructed on site during the demolition and construction process;
  - the location of plant away from the nearest sensitive receptors or in locations that provide good screening in the direction of sensitive receptors;

- use of broadband noise reverse alarms (where practicable) on mobile plant;
  - Machines in intermittent use will be shut down in the intervening periods between work or throttled down to a minimum;
  - Materials will be handled with care and be placed (e.g. not dropped into skips or lorries or dropped onto metal surfaces);
  - Mobile plant to be fitted with non-tonal reversing alarms i.e. broadband type noise reversing alarms used (e.g. `squawker' type) not `beeper' type or use of a banksman or use of visual alarm subject to health and safety approval;
  - careful handling of materials used in construction processes to avoid unnecessary noise;
  - Ensuring plant and machinery are regularly serviced and well maintained so as to minimise adverse noise impacts during the demolition and construction process.
5. Details of any floodlighting, including location, height, type and direction of light sources and intensity of illumination including association measures to limit temporary effects;
  6. Details of the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
  7. Details of the loading and unloading of plant and materials;
  8. Details of the storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
  9. The erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative Displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate;
  10. Details of the wheel washing facilities;
  11. Measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction to include construction phase dust mitigation measures;
  12. A scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works;
  13. Details of the litter and pest management;
  14. Protocols governing the establishment of the temporary construction compounds;
  15. Proposed method of piling for foundations and penetrative methods and associated timescales and noise mitigation measures;
  16. Details for the management of protected species and ecological mitigation;
  17. Water quality and surface water management to include the following;
    - Details of methods for pollution control to ensure that no pollution (such as debris from dust or surface run off) is able to enter groundwater;
    - Details on the storage and disposal of waste on site;
    - Details on how sediment/concrete/other debris that may be accidentally released during construction will be captured to prevent entering the water;

- Details of Biosecurity to ensure that all equipment brought onto site does not bring any contaminants such as invasive species onto the site and into the waters;
18. Details of the traffic management measures including:
- details on the daily and total number and size of lorries accessing the site;
  - the turning of delivery vehicles;
  - provisions for removing mud from vehicles;
  - A programme of works;
  - restrictions on vehicle delivery hours;
  - on-site construction vehicle parking & manoeuvring arrangements;
  - an HGV routing strategy;
  - staff parking arrangements;
  - management and procedures for access by abnormal loads;
  - local signage strategy; and the
  - details of any temporary highway works necessary for the construction of the facility.

The approved details shall be implemented throughout the duration of the demolition and construction phases.

Reason: To protect the amenities of nearby residential premises during the construction phase of the development and in the interests of highway safety, in accordance with Policies 10 (Protection of health, safety and amenity) and 12 (Managing traffic) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013), Policies CP27 (Pollution) and CP31 (Transport) of the East Hampshire and South Downs Joint Core Strategy (2014) and the revised National Planning Policy Framework (2021). This is a pre-commencement condition required to ensure the development is constructed in a manner which ensures amenity is protected and includes appropriate noise controls and thus goes to the heart of the permission.

5. Prior to the commencement of operations at the site, a Staff Travel Plan shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Waste Planning Authority. The Plan shall be implemented as agreed for the duration of the development.

Reason: To support sustainable transport policy in accordance with Policy 12 (Managing traffic) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013). and Policy CP31 – Transport of the East Hampshire and South Downs Joint Core Strategy (2014). This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure a Full Travel Plan is in place for the life of the development and thus goes to the heart of the permission.

6. Prior to the commencement of development, precise details of the external construction materials, finishes and colours shall be submitted to the Waste Planning Authority for approval. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policies 10 (Protecting health, safety and amenity) and 13 (High quality minerals and waste development) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013) and Policy CP29 – Design of the East Hampshire and South Downs Joint Core Strategy (2014). This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure that the exact construction materials are acceptable prior to the commencement of the development and thus goes to the heart of the development.

7. The demolition of the existing Materials Recovery Facility / Waste Transfer Station to prepare the site for the commencement of the construction of the development hereby permitted shall only take place once replacement waste management capacity (Materials Recovery) has been secured, as part of the Hampshire Waste Management Disposal Contract. Evidence of this secured capacity should be provided to the Waste Planning Authority prior to the commencement of demolition.

Reason: To ensure that there is no loss of an active waste site before adequate capacity can be secured elsewhere in accordance with Policy 26 (Safeguarding - waste infrastructure) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013). This is a pre commencement condition required to ensure waste capacity is sustained and thereby goes to the heart of the permission.

8. Prior to the commencement of development, a Tree Protection Plan identifying all trees on the application site and those which are to be retained/protected during development shall be submitted to the Waste Planning Authority for approval in writing. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: In the interests of the protection of flora and fauna, landscape character and visual amenity in accordance with Policies 3 (Protection of habitats and species), 5 (Protection of the countryside), 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) and 13 (High-quality design of minerals and waste developments) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013) and to ensure there is adequate provision for the preservation of trees (as required by Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990)). This is a pre commencement condition to ensure effective tree protection for the construction and operation of the development hereby permitted and thus goes to the heart of the permission.

9. Prior to commencement of the development hereby permitted, a detailed Landscaping Scheme for the site shall be submitted to and approved by the Waste Planning Authority in writing.

The scheme shall specify the types, size and species of all trees and shrubs to be planted; details of all trees to be retained and details of fencing/enclosure of the site, phasing and timescales for carrying out the works, and provision for future maintenance of all landscaping including vegetative walls.

Specified trees, shrubs, and grasses should be consistent with the character of native vegetation in colour/tone.

Any trees that are removed or found to be dead, dying, severely damaged or diseased within a period of five years from the date of planting shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species. The scheme shall be implemented as approved.

The approved details will be adhered to in full for the duration of the development.

Reason: To ensure the protection of flora and fauna, landscape character and visual amenity to ensure compliance with Policies 5 (Protecting the countryside), 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) and 13 (High quality design of minerals and waste developments) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013).

10. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, a Lighting Scheme shall be submitted to the Waste Planning Authority for approval in writing. The scheme shall include details of all external lighting, including floodlighting, safety lighting and illumination in relation to the construction of the development from within the plant, and measures to prevent light pollution spilling over the site boundary and to ensure surrounding countryside (including the South Downs National Park Dark Skies Reserve) is not impacted.

All lighting shall be in accordance with the standards set out in the Institute of Lighting Engineers 'Guidance notes for the reduction of obtrusive light' (ILE, 2005). The Lighting Scheme should take into account the International Dark Skies Reserve status of the National Park. It should be proportionate to the operational requirements of the site and not introduce an excessive amount of illumination. All lighting should be designed to minimise upward light spill.

The Lighting Scheme shall be implemented as approved for the duration of the development.

Reason: To minimise visual impact and to ensure the development is in accordance with Policies 5 (Protection of the countryside), 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) and 13 (High quality design of minerals and waste developments) of the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan (2013). This is a pre commencement conditions relating to mitigating the impacts of lighting, particularly for the Dark Skies Reserve so thereby goes to the heart of the permission.

11. No development approved by this planning permission shall commence until a Contamination Strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Waste Planning Authority. The Strategy will identify any residual contamination that may be present and ensure that this is remediated as part of the development, where necessary. The strategy will include the following components:
  1. A preliminary risk assessment which has identified:
    - a) all previous uses;
    - b) potential contaminants associated with those uses;
    - c) a conceptual model of the site indicating sources, pathways and receptors;
    - d) potentially unacceptable risks arising from contamination at the site.
  2. A Site Investigation Scheme, based on (1) to provide information for a detailed assessment of the risk to all receptors that may be affected, including those off-site;
  3. The results of the site investigation and the detailed risk assessment referred to in (2) and, based on these, an options appraisal and remediation strategy giving full details of the remediation measures required and how they are to be undertaken.
  4. A Verification Plan demonstrating the completion of works set out in the approved Remediation Strategy and the effectiveness of the remediation, providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in the Remediation Strategy in (3) are complete and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action.

The scheme shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: To ensure the effective management of any contaminated soils to protect the amenity of nearby residential properties and the environment in

accordance with Policy 10 (Protecting health, safety and amenity) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013) and of the East Hampshire and Policy CP27 – Pollution of the South Downs Joint Core Strategy (2014). This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure appropriate noise controls relating to construction works and thus goes to the heart of the permission.

12. Where remediation is required pursuant to Condition 11 (3), a Verification Plan demonstrating the completion of works set out in the approved Remediation Strategy and the effectiveness of the remediation, providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in the Remediation Strategy are complete and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action.

The scheme shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: To ensure the effective management of any contaminated soils to protect the amenity of nearby residential properties and the environment in accordance with Policy 10 (Protecting health, safety and amenity) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013) and of the East Hampshire and Policy CP27 – Pollution of the South Downs Joint Core Strategy (2014). This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure appropriate noise controls relating to construction works and thus goes to the heart of the permission.

13. No development shall begin until a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on the principles within the Surface Water Drainage Assessment V2.3, has been submitted and approved in writing by the Waste Planning Authority. The submitted details should include:
  - a) A technical summary highlighting any changes to the design from that within the approved Surface Water Drainage Assessment V2.3..
  - b) Infiltration test results undertaken in accordance with BRE365 and providing a representative assessment of those locations where infiltration features are proposed and demonstrating the 1m unsaturated zone. This must include winter / spring groundwater monitoring extending below the required 1m unsaturated zone.
  - c) Detailed drainage plans to include type, layout and dimensions of drainage features including references to link to the drainage calculations.
  - d) Detailed drainage calculations to demonstrate existing runoff rates are not exceeded and there is sufficient attenuation for storm events up to and including 1:100 + climate change with no flooding shown at the 1:30 storm event.

- e) Confirmation that sufficient water quality measures have been included to satisfy the methodology in the Ciria SuDS Manual C753.
- f) Exceedance plans demonstrating the flow paths and areas of ponding in the event of blockages or storms exceeding design criteria.

Reason: To ensure the development does not contribute to, and is not put at unacceptable risk from or adversely affected by unacceptable levels of water pollution caused by mobilised contaminants in accordance with Policies 10 (Protecting health, safety and amenity) and 11 (Flood risk and prevention) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013).

#### Construction operations

- 14. During the construction of the development, the hours of working shall be limited to 07.00 to 19.00hrs Monday to Saturday only. There shall be no working outside of these hours.

Reason: To minimise the impacts on residential and environmental amenity from the construction of the development in accordance with Policy 10 (Protecting health, safety and amenity) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013).

#### Operations

- 15. The development is permitted to operate on a 24-hour, 7 days a week basis. Heavy goods vehicles delivering any waste material, process consumables or removing material or residues associated with the operational phase of the development hereby approved shall only take place between the hours of 07.00 and 19.00 daily, outside of these hours (between the hours of 19.00 and 07.00) a maximum of 3 vehicles are permitted to deliver waste to the facility. There shall be no delivery of waste, the export of rejected waste or digestates on Christmas Day or Boxing Day.

Reason: In the interests of local amenity in accordance with Policies 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) and 12 (Managing traffic) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013).

- 14. Prior to the commencement of the operation of the Anaerobic Digester facility, a Digestate Management Plan shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Waste Planning Authority.

The Plan shall be implemented as approved for the duration of the development.

Reason: In order to ensure that the development does not harm important habitats and species and local amenity in accordance with Policies 3 (Protection of habitats and species) and 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013).

15. The Anaerobic Digester shall only process organic waste material derived from domestic or commercial sources.

Reason: In order to ensure that the development does not harm important habitats and species in accordance with Policy 3 (Protection of habitats and species) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013).

16. The unloading, storage and reloading of waste materials (both incoming and outgoing) shall only take place inside the building or from the digesters hereby approved.

Reason: In the interests of local amenity in accordance with Policy 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013).

17. The loading doors to the Anaerobic Digestion reception shall only be opened when required to allow vehicles and mobile equipment into and out of buildings, for maintenance or in an emergency. The loading doors shall be fitted with a fast-acting closing system that ensures they are closed rapidly following the safe passage of a vehicle into and out of the building. Doors which allow the movement of personnel into and out of the buildings shall be closed when not in use.

Reason: To minimise noise and odour emissions from the operation of the development to protect local amenity in accordance with Policy 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013).

18. Fugitive litter arising from the construction and operation of the development shall be minimised and measures shall be adopted to minimise the escape of litter from the boundaries of the planning application site. The steps to be taken by the operator to control the discharge of litter shall include but not be limited to: shall not be permitted to escape the boundaries of the planning application site. The steps to be taken by the operator to control the discharge of litter shall include but not be limited to:

- I. During construction works, the erection of a boundary fence to curtail any windblown litter and regular collection of any fugitive litter emissions which may occur within the fenced off area;
- II. Following the commissioning of the development:
  - a) All waste goods vehicles entering and leaving the site shall be fully enclosed or sheeted or as permitted under Highway Regulations;
  - b) Regular inspections and litter picks shall be undertaken outside the buildings to remove any fugitive litter from the external areas;
  - c) All vehicles leaving the site, with the exception of those exporting rejected waste or digestate material should be clear of waste to ensure that waste is not carried on to the public highway. In the event that waste from vehicles leaving the site are deposited on the public highway, measures shall be undertaken to clean the highway in conjunction with East Hampshire District Council.

Reason: To ensure local amenity and highway safety in accordance with Policies 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) and 12 (Managing traffic) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013).

19. The applicant shall publish air quality information on the facilities website as collected in accordance with the Environmental Permit.

Reason: To demonstrate the facility performance on air quality matters and to ensure local amenity in accordance with Policy 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013).

#### Waste types

20. Only residual non-hazardous waste, in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations (2016) and the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2021, shall be imported to the site.

A record of the quantity of residual waste delivered to the site and all residues from the facility shall be maintained by the operator. This should be made available to the Waste Planning Authority on request. All records should be kept for at least 48 months.

Reason: In the interests of public health, safety and amenity in accordance with Policy 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013).

### Storage of waste/digestates/rejected waste

21. There shall be no external deposition or outside storage of waste, digestates or rejected wastes outside of the main AD / WTS building and tanks.

Reason: To protect the amenity of the area in accordance with Policies 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) and 13 (High-quality design of minerals and waste development) of the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan (2013).

### Connection to the grid

22. If within a period of 12 months of the facility hereby approved becoming fully operational, the Anaerobic Digester has not commenced the export of biogas to the natural gas distribution network or electricity to the electrical distribution grid, the facility shall immediately cease operations. The facility will only be able to recommence operations once the export of biogas to the natural gas distribution network or electricity to the electrical distribution grid has been established. The Waste Planning Authority will be provided with evidence of the connection prior to the recommencement of operations.

Reason: To confirm the recovery status of the development and ensure that the waste is managed at a higher level of the waste hierarchy to comply with Policy 25 (Sustainable waste management) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013).

### Highways

23. There shall be no more than 113 two-way (in and about) Heavy Goods Vehicle movements per day.

Reason: In the interest of preventing littering and so reducing pollution and local amenity impact in accordance with 12 (Managing traffic) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013) and Policy CP31 – Transport of the East Hampshire and South Downs Joint Core Strategy (2014).

24. All vehicles, plant and machinery operated within the site shall be maintained in accordance with the manufacturers' specification at all times, shall be fitted with and use effective silencers and be fitted with and use white-noise type reversing alarms.

Reason: In order to protect local amenity in accordance with Policy 10

(Protecting public health, safety and amenity) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013).

25. All heavy goods vehicles entering and leaving the site associated with Waste Transfer Station shall be sheeted.

Reason: In the interest of preventing littering and so reducing pollution and local amenity impact in accordance with Policies 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) and 12 (Managing traffic) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013) and Policy CP31 – Transport of the East Hampshire and South Downs Joint Core Strategy (2014).

### Ecology

26. The biodiversity measures detailed in the submitted Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (Kevin Barry, June 2023) shall be adhered to and fully implemented for the duration of the development.

Reason: In the interests of nature conservation in accordance with the Habitats Regulations and Policy 3 (Protection of habitats and species) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013) and Policy CP21 – Biodiversity of the East Hampshire and South Downs Joint Core Strategy (2014).

### Noise

27. Prior to the operation of the facility hereby approved, an updated Noise Assessment shall be submitted to and approved approval by the Waste Planning Authority. This assessment should demonstrate the additional mitigation measures to be employed on site, how the operational noise criteria will be met at all sensitive receptor locations, as detailed in the Noise and Vibration Assessment (April 2020).

Reason: To prevent noise disturbance to the residents of the nearest houses in accordance with Policy 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013).

### Water Environment

28. No waste material or sediments shall be deposited so that it passes or is likely to pass into any watercourse.

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment in accordance with Policy 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013).

29. Any facilities for the storage of oils, fuels or chemicals shall be sited on impervious bases and surrounded by impervious bund walls. The bund capacity shall give 110% of the total volume for single and hydraulically linked tanks. If there is multiple tankage, the bund capacity shall be 110% of the largest tank or 25% of the total capacity of all tanks, whichever is the greatest. All filling points, vents, gauges and sight glasses and overflow pipes shall be located within the bund. There shall be no outlet connecting the bund to any drain, sewer or watercourse or discharging onto the ground. Associated pipework shall be located above ground where possible and protected from accidental damage.

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment in accordance with Policy 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013) and Policy CP27 – Pollution of the East Hampshire and South Downs Joint Core Strategy (2014).

30. Any doors to the bunded areas shall be closed at all times except for maintenance purposes or during emergencies.

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment in accordance with Policy 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013) and Policy CP27 – Pollution of the East Hampshire and South Downs Joint Core Strategy (2014).

#### Restriction of PD rights

31. Once the development hereby permitted is fully operational, notwithstanding the provisions of Schedule 2, Part 7 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that order), no extension to the building hereby permitted, or the erection of any building, fixed plant, fixed machinery or fixed structures on the land shall be erected other than that expressly authorised by this permission.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policies 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) and 13 (High quality design of minerals and waste development) of the Hampshire Mineral & Waste Plan (2013).

## Restoration / closure of the site

32. Following the decommissioning of the plant, a scheme and timetable for the demolition of the building and plant, the decontamination of the plant and the restoration of the site shall be submitted to the Waste Planning Authority for approval in writing. The scheme shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: To ensure that the land is capable of beneficial use following cessation of use in accordance with Policies 9 (restoration of minerals and waste developments), 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) and 13 (High quality design of minerals and waste development) of the Hampshire Mineral & Waste Plan (2013).

## Plans

33. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: **VES\_TD\_ALTONAD\_200\_001 Rev A, VES\_TD\_ALTONAD\_200\_002 Rev A, VES\_TD\_ALTONAD\_200\_003, VES\_TD\_ALTONAD\_200\_004, VES\_TD\_ALTONAD\_200\_005**

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

## **Note to Applicant**

1. In determining this planning application, the Waste Planning Authority has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner in accordance with the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.
2. This decision does not purport or convey any approval or consent which may be required under the Building Regulations or any other Acts, including Byelaws, orders or Regulations made under such acts.
3. The Minerals and Waste Planning Authority, in accordance with the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (2013), recommends that the site operator should set up and run a regular liaison panel to aid in addressing public complaints about the existing activities on the site, to assist resolution of any possible future issues, and support community relationships. The Panel should be set prior to the demolition of the MRF / WTS. More guidance on the establishment of a liaison panel is found here:  
<https://documents.hants.gov.uk/mineralsandwaste/LiaisonPanelProtocolformineralsandwastesites.pdf>

4. Under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 the operator of a waste site will require an environmental permit for the importation, storage and treatment of waste.
5. The digestion activity associated with this development will require an Environmental Permit under the Environmental Permitting (England & Wales) Regulations 2016, from the Environment Agency, unless an exemption applies. The applicant is advised to contact the Environment Agency on 03708 506 506 for further advice and to discuss the issues likely to be raised. You should be aware that there is no guarantee that a permit will be granted. Additional 'Environmental Permitting Guidance' can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/environmental-permit-check-if-you-need-one>.
6. The sites Environmental Permit will govern the types and quantities of waste which can be accepted at the site.
7. The CL:AIRE Definition of Waste: Development Industry Code of Practice (version 2) provides operators with a framework for determining whether or not excavated material arising from site during remediation and/ or land development works is waste or has ceased to be waste. Under the Code of Practice:
  - excavated materials that are recovered via a treatment operation can be re-used on-site providing they are treated to a standard such that they fit for purpose and unlikely to cause pollution;
  - treated materials can be transferred between sites as part of a hub and cluster project;
  - some naturally occurring clean material can be transferred directly between sites

Developers should ensure that all contaminated materials are adequately characterised both chemically and physically, and that the permitting status of any proposed on-site operations are clear. If in doubt, the Environment Agency should be contacted for advice at an early stage to avoid any delays.

The EA recommends that developers should refer to:

- the [Position Statement](#) on the Definition of Waste: Development Industry Code of Practice;
  - The [waste management](#) page on gov.uk
8. It is noted from the site's environmental permit that there is no groundwater monitoring on site. Any boreholes that remain on site should be kept in place for possible permitting requirements, and suggest that discussions with the Environment Agency should be had regarding these.
  9. The operator should be aware they are responsible for any littering of waste from this site. It is acknowledged that the opportunities for the operator to clean up of litter on public highways are limited, but the operator should take all reasonable and necessary measures to prevent litter and to collect and dispose of any that does occur, on or off their site.

10. Network Rail's request that the applicant contacts Asset Protection and Optimisation (ASPRO) team prior to works commencing if permission is granted and provide more information as noted in their planning application consultation response. The Alton branch line rail connection should be safeguarded for the duration of the development.  
[\(https://www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/looking-after-the-railway/asset-protection-and-optimisation/\)](https://www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/looking-after-the-railway/asset-protection-and-optimisation/).
11. Where Public Rights of Way are close to application sites or are used for access to the development site, applications must show these Rights of Way on the submitted plans and detail how they will be accommodated within the proposals. Government guidance requires that applications should not be validated unless such a plan has been submitted.
12. Nothing connected with the development, or its future use, shall have an adverse effect on the Public Rights of Way, which must always remain available for safe public use at all times.
13. Should the developer identify the need to temporarily close or adjust a PROW, they should follow the guidance on the Hampshire County Council website. This includes further information on the duties as a land owner and/or developer, found at <https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/rightsofway/landowners>
14. No vehicles (including builder's and contractor's), machinery, equipment, materials, spoil, scaffolding, or anything else associated with the works, use, or occupation of the development, shall be left on or near to a Public Right of Way as to cause obstruction, hindrance, or a hazard to the legitimate users. The public retain the right to use the public right of way at all times.
15. Granting of planning permission does not grant the applicant access rights to the site via the PROW network and separate consent is required.
16. All vehicles that would be legitimately accessing the site via a Public Right of Way should give way to public users, which could include horse-riders and cyclists, at all times. In cases with legitimate vehicular access a Construction Traffic (or Environmental) Management Plan (CTMP) should be submitted to, and approved by, Hampshire Countryside Service as Highway Authority prior to any approval by the Planning Authority, and prior to commencement, to ensure the protection of biodiversity and public safety.
17. There must be no surface alterations to a Public Right of Way without the consent of Hampshire County Council as Highway Authority. Planning permission under the Town and County Planning Act (1990) does not provide this and separate consent is required. To carry out any such works without this permission would constitute an offence under Section 131 of the Highways Act (1980).
18. No works to the surface of the Public Right of Way shall be carried out without prior approval of the Area Countryside Access Manager. Any damage caused

to the surface of the Public Right of Way by construction traffic will be required to be restored to the satisfaction of the Area Countryside Access Manager on the completion of the build.

19. There is a legal agreement attached to this decision. This covers mitigation concerning Heavy Goods Vehicle routing,