

Planning Application for Gillmoss Materials Recovery Facility (MRF)

Non-Executive Summary

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1 Planning Application for a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF)

1.1 Introduction

This planning application proposes to develop a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) at Gillmoss, Stonebridge Lane in Liverpool. The proposed MRF is designed to handle 100,000 tonnes of dry recyclable material every year including plastic bottles, aluminium and steel cans, paper, cardboard and glass bottles and jars which are collected from households across Merseyside by the District Councils. The facility will be operational twenty four hours per day, seven days per week and accept deliveries between 08:00 and 18:00 in the summer and 08:00 and 17:00 in the winter.

1.2 Need for the Scheme

There are a number of key pieces of legislation that have been introduced in recent years including; Landfill Directive, Waste Emissions Trading Act, Landfill Allowance Trading Regulations and the Waste Strategy 2007 which have established a clear legal requirement for Local Authorities in England to dispose of less waste to landfill and recycle more material. The proposed development will allow up to 100,000 tonnes of material to be recycled which will assist Local Authorities on Merseyside to fulfil their obligations with regard to recycling.

1.3 Accordance with Policy

The proposed development accords with a range of relevant national, regional and local policies which are covered in detail in Section 4 of the Planning Statement.

1.4 Job Creation

The construction phase of the proposed MRF development will result in the creation of a number of temporary skilled, semi skilled and unskilled jobs. Once the MRF is operational, the facility will result in the creation of approximately 100 permanent jobs.

1.5 Site Selection

The site selection process found several sites in the search area that were suitable for waste management uses. However, the Gillmoss site was identified as the preferred site as it scored favourably in the site criteria scoring process and very favourably in the Deliverability Assessment (details of the scoring process and the Deliverability Assessment can be found in Section 6 of the Planning Statement). The Gillmoss site is considered deliverable given the existing use as a waste management site and that the site was under the control of Waste Disposal Authority.

1.6 Environmental Appraisal

1.6.1 Air Quality

The proposed development will not give rise to significant amounts of dust and odours. Therefore the impact of the proposed development on air quality is likely to

be insignificant. The traffic impact on air quality associated with the proposed development is also likely to be insignificant. Due to the size of the proposed development it is anticipated that there may be some impact on air quality due to dust generated during the construction phase. However with proper mitigation measures being employed (which are outlined in detail in Appendix A to the Environmental Appraisal) the likely risk will be reduced to a temporary minor one.

1.6.2 *Noise and Vibration-*

Detailed background noise monitoring was carried out to enable the cumulative impact of any noise from the operation of the plant to be assessed. The results of this assessment indicated that the only place where noise from the proposed development was likely to exceed Liverpool City Council's noise regulations was the eastern boundary of the site. Consequently the erection of a 6m high barrier is proposed as a mitigation measure that will bring the levels of noise to a level that is not usually perceptible. Although the construction of the proposed development will give rise to some noise, with the employment of appropriate mitigation measures (details of which can be found in Appendix B to the Environmental Appraisal) the impact can be reduced to a minor and of course temporary one. In addition the contractor responsible for the construction of the proposed development will have to carry out a noise assessment as part of the Construction Environment Management Plan.

1.6.3 *Transport Assessment*

The transport impact of the Gillmoss Recycling Park is low. Access to public transport is good, local walking and cycling provision is good and the site is well located in relation to the strategic road network. Employees will be encouraged to use alternative and public transport to access the site. For most of the day, the development will generate very low numbers of movements and will not impact significantly on local conditions. Even during peak hours the numbers of vehicle movements the development will generate will have a minimal impact on local conditions. Although traffic movement to and from the site is possible for cars in all directions, HGV movements will be restricted, as per current arrangements, to the East Lancs Road only, thereby minimising the impact on local roads.

1.6.4 *Townscape and Visual*

The proposed MRF represents an addition to the Gillmoss Recycling Park on an area of the site which is currently undeveloped. The MRF will be visible from Stonebridge Lane and from the residential properties that lie to the north of the site. However, sympathetic architecture, development of a strong landscaping design and the extension of the earthen bund (and suitable native tree and shrub planting) along the north boundary of the site will help to mitigate the visual effects of the proposed MRF development.

1.6.5 *Geology, Soils and Contamination*

There has only been one recorded development on the site aside from its present use, that of an electrical and mechanical engineering works circa 1955-88. Some contaminants were found that may be affecting ground water on the site. However

the redevelopment of the site with large areas of hardstanding may prevent rainwater infiltrating the affected areas and therefore improve the situation. A small area of the proposed development area was also found to be affected by contamination. Mitigation measures for this area involving capping the area with inert material or excavation and off site disposal will be agreed with the relevant authorities.

1.6.6 *Water Resources and Flooding*

It is believed that the proposed development will not create additional flood risk and will be exposed to an acceptable level of flood risk. The development falls within the Environment Agency's definition of Flood Zone 1 which has a low annual probability of flooding. The proposed development will increase the runoff volume; discharge consents will therefore be necessary for the implementation of the scheme and will need to be agreed with the Environment Agency.

1.6.7 *Ecology and Biodiversity*

Detailed surveys were carried out on the site to identify if there were any rare or important animal, plant or bird species present but none were found. Therefore the development will have a neutral effect on nature conservation.

1.6.8 *Socio-Economic*

The creation of both temporary and permanent jobs in the construction and operational phases of the development and the provision of a visitor and education centre to promote environmental education means that the proposed MRF development will have an overall positive socio-economic impact.

1.6.9 *Archaeology and Cultural Heritage*

No scheduled or unscheduled monuments were found within a 1km radius of the site. Sugar Brook which is documented on the National Monument Register as an archaeological site and Gillmoss Lodge which lies 700m to the South East of the proposed development site is a grade II listed building. However, the proposed development is not anticipated to have any impact on either of these sites. Moreover, a full archaeological investigation is not recommended for this development, based on the information gathered and the improbability of finding any sites of archaeological potential on or near to the development site.

1.7 **Conclusions**

All the assessments undertaken to date indicate that, with appropriate mitigation, the proposed development will not result in any significant adverse environmental, cultural or socio-economic effects. Considering the need to develop a MRF facility in the Merseyside area, the contribution that it will make to achieving Government recycling targets the benefits that will result from less material going to landfill and the jobs the facility will create. The proposed development will also bring several positive benefits to the community.