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Veolia ES South Downs Ltd

Design and Access Statement

Pebsham Household Waste Recycling Site & Waste and Recyclables Transfer Station

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1 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement accompanies the planning applications submitted on behalf of Veolia Environmental Services South Downs Ltd (Veolia).

Planning Application 1 seeks:

- Variation of conditions attached to an existing planning consent (RR/498/CM) for the change of use to a Waste and Recyclables Transfer Station (WRTS), depot and ancillary uses;

Planning Application 2 proposes:

- Minor modifications to the Waste and Recyclables Transfer Station site layout; and,
- Construction of a new Household Waste Recycling Site (HWRS) on land south of the Pebsham WRTS.

The minor modifications element of Planning Application 2 concerns:

- New internal access around the western side of the WRTS, including a small extension to the existing building to incorporate a weighbridge; and,
- Access through to the new HWRS to allow bins to be serviced directly from the WRTS.

The application sites lie on the outskirts of St Leonards on Sea, approximately 5km west of Hastings and 2km east of Bexhill at grid reference TQ 769 087. It is located close to the south coast, approximately 350m north of the A259 coastal road.

This Statement is required by the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and includes details about the sites, what is proposed, and how each aspect of the development will be designed and accessed. The statement is prepared with regard to guidance given in Circular 01/2006 (DCLG 2006) and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) publication, Design and Access Statements: How to write, read and use them (CABE 2006).

In accordance with guidance on Design and Access Statements as issued by CABE, this Statement considers the evolution of the design process, including site assessment and consultation, and also the proposed:

- Use;
- Amount of development;
- Layout;
- Scale;
- Landscaping;
- Appearance; and
- Access.

This information is preceded by a section on the existing sites and local context. The Statement mainly focuses on the proposed HWRS, as this constitutes physical development with strong design and access elements. Nevertheless, the proposals

to vary conditions attached to the existing consent and to undertake the minor modifications are also considered where appropriate.

2 Background to Proposal

The proposals aim to enable Veolia to fulfil its waste management contractual obligations with East Sussex County Council by improving the operational capacity at its Waste and Recycling and Transfer Station (WRTS), which is currently limited in throughput and other operational matters by conditions attached to the existing planning consent. Furthermore, the provision of a new Household Waste Recycling Site (HWRS) on land immediately to the south of the WRTS is deemed necessary to replace and enhance existing facilities currently located at a separate site. The new facility would improve operational efficiency, reduce health and safety concerns associated with the existing arrangements and accommodate a greater throughput of waste and recyclables.

2.1 Waste Recycling Transfer Station

Since implementing the planning consent (RR/498/CM) granted in March 2007, Veolia believes it necessary to make changes to the associated planning conditions in order to improve the operational capabilities of the facility. Whilst the facility has made a substantial contribution to the needs of the County's waste management, the proposed changes are necessary to enable Veolia to fulfil its contractual obligations to the County in a sustainable manner. The existing conditions are thought to place unnecessary limitations on the operational capacity of the site, to the detriment of the overall waste management regime in the County. In addition to the changes to conditions, some minor modifications to the internal layout of the WRTS site are also proposed to support the improvement of operational capabilities and therefore the fulfilment of contractual obligations.

2.2 Household Waste Recycling Site

An existing Household Waste Recycling Site (HWRS) is located adjacent to the landfill development at the northern end and to the east of Freshfields Road. This operates under a temporary planning permission, which expires on the 1st September 2011. The Consent (RR/555/CM) requires all plant, equipment, buildings and other structures to be removed and all hard surfaces broken up and removed by 30th November 2011. In granting this consent on 25th July 2008 the County Council recognised that an alternative site has been identified (the subject of the current application) but that the temporary facilities needed to continue in place to provide an essential facility while the proposal is assessed and, subject to approval, is implemented.

The proposed site is deemed suitable in the physical context, given that it adjoins the existing WRTS and comprises concealed, developable land. The Environmental Statement for the site reveals that very few environmental or social negative impacts are likely to be caused by the proposed HWRS. Furthermore, the Sustainability Statement identifies the enhanced facility would contribute to the improvement of local recycling rates and assist the local authorities in meeting recycling and recovery targets.

2.3 Consultation

A screening opinion was initially sought from East Sussex County Council for the need of an Environmental Impact Assessment. A site meeting and further discussion with an East Sussex development control officer confirmed that such an assessment was relevant to the proposal. Issues raised through the preparation of the subsequent Environmental Statement have been considered in the development of the scheme. Furthermore, discussion with East Sussex's Highways officers have ensured that traffic related issues have been taken fully accounted for in the Transport Assessment, which in turn has influenced the design and layout of the HWRS.

3 The Site

3.1 The Sites as Existing

Both application sites are accessed via Freshfields Road and cover a total area of 2.1 hectares. The sites fall within land allocated for waste facilities in the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Waste Local Plan 2006.

A number of buildings and facilities, including a centrally located industrial building some 2,875m^2 with a height of 15m, make up the existing WRTS operations and occupy Planning Application site 1. The site also includes weighbridge facilities together with administration, depot and mess room accommodation, and parking areas. The remainder of the site is hard surfaced across much of its area, with drainage controlled via a network of gullies, drains and interceptors to the foul and surface water drainage systems (refer to drawing 401(1)).

The existing WTRS is subject to planning consent RR/498/CM (March 2007) for use as a Waste and Recyclables Transfer Station depot and ancillary uses. This includes Freshfields Road from the junction with the A259, occupying a total area of 2.23 hectares.

The area of land to the south of the WRTS is currently disused scrubland with steep embankments, and includes area of made ground. It experiences significant changes in level, rising several metres above the level of the WRTS. There is some site screening provided by vegetation made up of a belt of small trees and shrubs, which help to shield views of the WRTS from the south. Part of this area is the proposed site for the new HWRS, which has been designed to retain the important screening effect of the embankment in acoustic and visual terms. This area, and the part of the WRTS site which is relevant to the minor modifications element of the application, makes the Planning Application 2 site (refer to drawing 401(2))

3.2 The Site Context

The sites are bounded to the north by a high embankment, a former gypsy site, a sewage treatment works and land forming part of the Pebsham landfill site, operated by Biffa. To the east, the site is bounded immediately by Gorringe Stream and Freshfields Road, with playing fields, a disused tip and an existing HWRS beyond this. The south and west are bounded by steep embankments topped with vegetation and beyond this by playing and agricultural fields.

Vehicular access to the sites is via the A259 and Freshfields Road. There is no official pedestrian or public access to the site, and no Public Rights of Way are located in the vicinity. There is evidence however, that the site of the proposed HWRS is used informally for unauthorised recreation – particularly by dirt bike riders.

The County and district Councils have long term plans to develop a Countryside Park across the green space between Hastings, Bexhill and Crowhurst. The total site area is approximately 600 hectares and will eventually encompass the existing Pebsham landfill. The aim is to create a sustainable and multi functional park, with areas for leisure, recreation, sport, ecology and education. The proposed park would encompass all of the open areas around the existing Veolia site. A public

consultation exercise was undertaken in 2005, and a report on the survey results demonstrated that 76% of respondents supported the scheme. This has been an important consideration in the design of the proposed development.

4 The Proposed Development: Design

4.1 The Proposed Use and Amount of Development: Minor Modifications to WRTS

The minor modifications proposed to the internal layout of the WRTS site are:

- New internal access around the WRTS building, including a small extension to the existing building to incorporate a weighbridge.
- Access through to the new HWRS.

These are presented in drawings 402, 404 and 405. The proposals would support the improvement of the facility's operational capabilities and therefore have no negative effect on the existing use. The proposed weighbridge building would be clad in vertical profile coated steel cladding to match the existing cream/light grey colour.

It is considered that the proposed minor modifications are unlikely to materially affect the existing site's layout, landscaping or appearance.

4.2 The Proposed Use and Amount of Development: Household Waste Recycling Site

The proposed HWRS provides an enhanced facility to replace the existing Hastings HWRS sited to the north east of the site. The site would comprise a split level facility with provision for 12 bins at low level (same level as the existing WRTS) and a further 6 at the upper public parking area (approximately 1.6m above the WRTS floor level), refer to drawing 422. Areas would be available at the upper level for additional recycling material including Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and fridges.

Should the existing HWRS not be replaced, the ability of the County to meet its local recycling targets could be reduced as the existing site is both small and constrained and fails to provide modern facility standards for efficient separation of recyclables. The current HWRS has a throughput of about 14,000 tonnes of household waste per annum. The new site would have a capacity to accept greater volumes than this, to allow for future growth in recycling, although it is not anticipated that overall throughput would rise by more than 3,000tpa in the short to medium term, recyclables recovery rates will be enhanced. Modern HWRSs take a wide range of waste materials for reuse and recycling, and this will be expanded over the forthcoming years.

The proposed operating hours of the facility would be from 0800hrs to 1800hrs (1700hrs* in winter) every day except for Christmas, Boxing and New Years Days.

* Note: under current operational arrangements it is likely that the HWRS would close at 1600hrs in winter but the proposal seeks to retain the flexibility for future opening up to 1700hrs.

4.3 Proposed Layout: Household Waste Recycling Site

As mentioned above, the proposed layout consists of 12 bins at low level (same level as the existing WRTS) and a further 6 at the upper public parking area (approximately 1.6m high). For more information refer to drawings 421 and 422. The split level design of the site facilitates access to bins and separate areas for recycling of different materials. It is intended that some or all of the bins would be serviced directly from the WRTS, improving operational efficiency and reducing the need for large vehicles to access Freshfields Road.

The south and south eastern boundaries of the site would be skirted by the proposed access road. This area accommodates a total of 24 parking spaces, including 2 spaces for disabled people. To the north east of the site an access road only for waste vehicle traffic links the proposed site with the existing WRTS site. A portacabin for staff is also proposed in this area, as is a cycle parking area.

The design of the development has been an iterative process, taking on board and designing out environmental concerns associated with the original scheme. Notably, these included loss of the tree belt which would have made the WRTS more visible from properties to the south; removal of large volumes of earth, and the need for two stream crossings. The current design allows for retention of much of the tree belt, requires less soil to be removed and only has one stream crossing. This has resulted in a sustainable and environmentally robust design which maximises off road vehicle space whilst minimising environmental impact.

4.4 Proposed Scale: Household Waste Recycling Site

The proposed site's scale is reduced from views to the south and west by the high embankments which immediately abut the site and by the existing building of the WRTS and a further embankment that sits to the north. The majority of views from the east would be interrupted by the proposed landscape buffer planting along the eastern boundary (Drawing 422 view A).

Any impact that may occur is likely to be most apparent from the north east. However, the spacious layout of the proposed site, which accommodates very little in the way of above ground development, reduces the impact that the proposal may have. Furthermore, the large bulky appearance of the building on the WRTS site, which sits some 10 metres away, helps to reduce the apparent scale of the proposed HRWS and would block views from many points to the north east. This effect is aided by the split level design, which reduces the impact of the 12 bins that sit on the lower level and thus gives the appearance of a much reduced height.

4.5 Proposed Landscaping: Household Waste Recycling Site

Soft landscaping is proposed in the form of designated landscape buffer zones along the site's eastern boundary and area towards the west. These would assist in concealing the proposed development from onward views along the eastern boundary, thus protecting the proposed designated Countryside Park from any potential views of the site. A full landscape planting plan will be developed prior to construction. The existing embankments to the north, south and west and the

retention of much of the existing vegetation screen would continue to filter out any views of the proposed development.

4.6 Proposed Appearance: Household Waste Recycling Site

The appearance of the proposed development repeats the design concept of the neighbouring WRTS site. The colour of the bins, portacabin, gates, perimeter fencing and Armco barriers are yet to be confirmed. However, it is expected that these will not differ greatly from those colours set on the WRTS site and will be sympathetic to the environmental surroundings.

Proposed spotlights as opposed to floodlights would be fitted with shields to ensure that the lights point downwards and therefore prevent light spillage. The type of lighting would also minimise the impact of light pollution whilst generally enabling safe access and security to the site.

5 The Proposed Development: Access

5.1 Overall Impact on Local Highway Network

The expected temporary or permanent closure of the existing landfill site located to the north-east of the proposed site, or its continued operation at a reduced level of inputs, would reduce traffic levels on Freshfields Road and more than offset the additional traffic generated by the increased capacity at the WRTS. The additional capacity would be used only in the event of the temporary or permanent closure of the adjacent landfill for the receipt of non-inert waste.

The existing hazard caused by queuing traffic on Freshfields Road would be improved by the proposed access arrangements for the new HWRS therefore making the route safer for works vehicles to travel. This is explained in greater detail in the Transport Assessment, which shows that there will be capacity for up to 38 additional vehicles to be accessing the site without generating queues on Freshfields Road, when compared with the existing situation.

Although the A259 is heavily congested, the development should not add to this and the opening of the proposed Bexhill to Hastings link road is envisaged to reduce traffic levels significantly on this route in the future. The transport impacts of the scheme are discussed in greater detail in the Transport Assessment submitted with the planning application.

5.2 Proposed Vehicle Access: Waste Recycling Transfer Site

The proposed internal access to the western side of the WRTS would enable improved circulation of vehicles around the site, and allow vehicles to be loaded whilst on the proposed new weighbridge facility. The proposed new layout would be addressed by the change to Conditions 3 and 11 of the existing planning consent RR/498/CM.

The proposed access ramp, linking the WRTS with the proposed HWRS would allow bins to be serviced directly into the WRTS and would reduce the requirement for access to Freshfields Road. This would improve the safety and traffic flow for other road users on Freshfields Road by reducing the need for works traffic to use the route.

5.3 Proposed Vehicle Access: Household Waste Recycling Site

Vehicles would access the site from Freshfields Road and a barrier would be located at the site entrance to restrict the height of vehicles that could enter.

The access road would cross an existing drainage ditch, the flow of which would be maintained by a culvert, and split into two lanes as it enters the site. During busy times the second lane would be used as a queuing lane whilst at quiet times a single lane only would be in operation. The access road has a number of tight bends which would act to calm traffic speeds and it would rise at a slight gradient up to the public parking area. At the end of the queuing lane the traffic would merge back into a single lane before entering the Public Parking area.

Signage would be used at the end of the access road to encourage vehicles to stop and wait to be called forward. At this point a visual inspection of the load could be carried out. Unsuitable loads could be directed through the facility.

Once the delivery is completed public vehicles would leave the facility by an exit ramp.

The bins located at the lower level would be serviced by vehicles directly from the WRTS site. The bins located at the upper public parking area would be serviced by vehicles from the WRTS via a ramp. When bins at the upper level are being serviced, the public parking area would be closed to the general public for a short period and vehicles would queue on the access road.

The road pavements would be constructed of concrete whilst footpaths would be constructed of tarmac.

5.4 Public Parking Area: Household Waste Recycling Site

The Public Parking area has 24 parking spaces at the north side of the site giving access to 12 bins located at the lower level of the WRTS. Two of these bays would be designated for disabled people only. A further 5 parking bays would be located to the south of the Public Parking area giving direct access to the bins located at the upper level. The provision for 6 cycle parking bays are also proposed and would be located in the north east corner of the site.

It is anticipated that drivers would reverse into the parking spaces and unload their vehicles from the rear. Access to the bins would be from a footpath 2m wide which would lead to walkways between the bins. The site will be staffed to ensure that assistance can be provide to elderly, infirm or disabled visitors where required.

Loading at the head of the bins would be restricted by the use of a 2m high barrier. A moveable sign could be attached to this barrier to identify if the bin is in use and the product it is to receive e.g. Green Waste. At other locations a 1.1m high hand rail would be provided.

6 Conclusion

This Design and Access Statement has been produced in accordance with published guidance and has set out the design and access issues relevant to the planning application under consideration.

The proposed design of the HWRS is considered to sit comfortably within the immediate landscape and is well related to existing waste uses. The presence of three high embankments to the north, south and west, and vegetation buffers would conceal the proposed development from views from those directions. Views from the more exposed east would be mitigated by appropriate landscaping zones. The co-location of the proposed HWRS and existing WRTS would contribute to enhancing the operational capabilities of both sites, the reduction in the need for transportation of waste being one such gain. It would also reduce the visual impacts of two disparate sites, consolidating the waste activities into a single location.

The proposed minor modifications to the existing WRTS facility take account of the existing design and layout and are considered to be well related to the site's features without adding or detracting from them, whilst improving operational efficiencies and service delivery.

The proposed layout of the HWRS has been designed to provide adequate on site queuing for site users, thereby remove queuing traffic on Freshfields Road and enhancing its safety particularly in relation to HGV usage associated with the landfill and WRTS. The HWRS arrangements will also provide access/egress separation for HGV and visitor vehicles. The parking and on-site management provides for disabled users. A proposed access ramp would link the proposed HWRS with the existing WRTS facility, therefore allowing the movement of works vehicles between sites without the need to use Freshfields Road. This would complement the improvements sought in road safety on this route.

The proposed development demonstrates well designed waste facilities that will gain operational efficiencies and deliver a number of benefits to the whole of East Sussex. Without the implementation of this proposal, the attainment of recycling targets would be hindered and road users of the immediate local road network would remain subject to the existing road safety hazard.