

Statement: Permit variation application for the Beddington Energy Recovery Facility

January 26, 2022

A statement from the South London Waste Partnership boroughs responding to news that Viridor is seeking permission from the Environment Agency to increase the amount of waste that can be treated at the Beddington Energy Recovery Facility.

A spokesperson for the South London Waste Partnership said:

“Viridor (operator of the Beddington Energy Recovery Facility) has informed the South London Waste Partnership that it has made an application to the Environment Agency to vary the facility’s environmental permit. If approved by the Environment Agency, the amount of waste that can be treated at the facility would increase by 10%.

“The South London Waste Partnership boroughs are disappointed that Viridor is making this application just 12 months after the Environment Agency agreed to increase the maximum capacity of the facility by 15%. Whilst the Partnership recognises the need for additional energy from waste treatment capacity in London and the south east (significant volumes of non-recyclable waste continue to be landfilled or exported to energy from waste facilities in mainland Europe) we are concerned about the impact any increase in capacity at the Beddington facility would have on local traffic congestion and vehicle emissions.

“As a partnership we will want to fully understand the implications that this increase would have on traffic movements and emissions. We expect the Environment Agency to view this as a ‘Substantial Variation’ to the permit, which means there will be a period of consultation, most likely taking place in summer 2022. This will be an important opportunity for local residents and stakeholders to review the technical information that has been submitted by Viridor in support of the application, and share feedback with the Environment Agency directly, who will ultimately make the decision on whether to approve the application or not.”

Ends.

Notes to Editors

- The Beddington ERF is a state-of-the-art facility that offers a safe, cost-effective and environmentally-sustainable alternative to landfill
- The Beddington ERF has replaced the Beddington Landfill Site, moving the South London Waste Partnership boroughs (Croydon, Kingston, Merton and Sutton) an important step up the waste hierarchy – using non-recyclable waste to generate energy for the National Grid is preferable to burying it in the ground
- Every tonne of waste that is sent to the Beddington ERF instead of the Beddington Landfill Site represents a saving of around 440kg of Carbon Dioxide equivalent (CO₂e)
- Emissions from the ERF are monitored every 10 seconds, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and are strictly regulated by the Environment Agency to ensure the environment and public health is protected. Detailed emissions reports are published twice per month at www.beddingtonerf.info
- We would all like to see a future where residual waste treatment facilities are not needed. But the reality is that – for now at least – they are a vital part of our waste management infrastructure. Despite being some of the best recyclers in London, the four SLWP boroughs are left with around 200,000 tonnes of waste each year that either cannot be recycled or has not been sorted for recycling. There are three options available to the boroughs for treating that waste: bury it in landfill, export it out of the area for someone else to deal with (which would significantly increase traffic movements) or treat it in a modern energy from waste facility within our borders. We are confident that in the Beddington ERF, we have the best available option.