Thorverton Road Distribution Hub

Application for a variation of Environmental Permit

Non Technical Summary

Introduction

This non-technical summary forms part of the application to vary the environmental permit (reference EPR/CB3807CF) for Devon Contract Waste (DCW) Ltd's Thorverton Road Distribution Hub transfer station (the site). The site is currently permitted as a bespoke waste operation permit for a household, industrial and commercial (HCI) transfer station including repair and refurbishment of WEEE, plus cable treatment activities. The permit will be varied to allow the operation of a WEEE Treatment facility.

The Site

Thorverton Road Distribution Hub is located on Matford Business Park in Exeter, Devon, EX2 8FS, at National Grid Reference (NGR) SX 93076 89848.

The site is located approximately 3km south of Exeter city centre and is predominantly surrounded by industrial and commercial units within Matford Business Park, which can be accessed via the A379 to the south of the site. The site is bounded on its northeast side by a railway line, beyond which lies the Exeter Canal and River Exe, and a series of playing fields, which then transitions into residential properties approximately 800m from the permit boundary. The nearest residential properties lie to the south of the site, approximately 700m away.

The Exe Estuary, located approximately 430m east of the permit boundary, is designated as a SSSI, SPA and Ramsar. An area of Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland is located 600m southwest of the site boundary. Local wildlife sites Alphin Brook and the Exeter Ship Canal are located 200m and 275m east of the permit boundary, respectively. There are no further designated habitats within 1km of the site.

The Application

The site is currently permitted as a transfer station for the storage and transfer of household, industrial and commercial wastes prior to recycling and/or recovery, including repair or refurbishment of WEEE. Additionally, the site is permitted to treat cable by stripping, separation, granulation and shredding.

DCW propose to vary the permit to allow operation of a WEEE recycling facility, including the manual and mechanical treatment of WEEE. The permit will retain conditions for a HCI transfer station, which the site will continue to operate as while it transitions into a WEEE treatment facility.

It is proposed that the repair or refurbishment of WEEE should be brought under the conditions of the WEEE Treatment facility as part of the variation.

Treatment activities will be limited to: sorting, dismantling, separation, shredding, crushing, screening, grading, shearing, granulation, repair or refurbishment, or cutting of WEEE waste for recovery. The following waste types will be treated:

- 09 01 11* single-use cameras containing batteries included in 16 06 01, 16 06 02 or 16 06 03
- 09 01 12 single-use cameras containing batteries other than those mentioned in 09 01 11
- 16 02 09* transformers and capacitors containing PCBs
- 16 02 10* discarded equipment containing or contaminated by PCBs other than those mentioned in 16 02 09
- 16 02 11* discarded equipment containing chlorofluorocarbons, hydrochlorofluorocarbons and hydrofluorocarbons
- 16 02 13* discarded equipment containing hazardous components other than those mentioned in 16 02 09 to 16 02 12
- 16 02 14 discarded equipment other than those mentioned in 16 02 09 to 16 02 13
- 16 02 15* hazardous components removed from discarded equipment
- 16 02 16 components removed from discarded equipment other than those mentioned in 16 02 15
- 20 01 21* fluorescent tubes and other mercury-containing waste
- 20 01 23* WEEE containing CFCs
- 20 01 35* WEEE containing hazardous components other than fluorescent tubes and other mercury containing waste or CFCs
- 20 01 36 WEEE not containing hazardous substances or components

Activities will not include de-gassing of ozone depleting substances, treatment of WEEE to be disposed of to landfill or incinerated, or mixing of hazardous waste with other hazardous or non-hazardous waste. WEEE shall be treated using best available treatment, recovery and recycling techniques (BATRRT) and in accordance with *Waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE): appropriate measures for permitted facilities*.

All WEEE treatment will be contained within enclosed buildings. Up to 5000 tonnes of WEEE is to be mechanically treated annually.

WEEE is inspected indoors to identify items suitable for reuse or refurbishment. Reusable items undergo functionality testing, while other waste is manually sorted into treatment or storage streams. These low-impact processes reduce the need for dust-generating mechanical treatment.

Items that have been identified as suitable for refurbishment may be subject to testing and small-scale repairs. Repaired items will be subject to PAT testing and full functionality testing to ensure their suitability for re-use.

WEEE not suitable for re-use is dismantled manually where appropriate to remove intact components such as batteries and circuit boards, limiting breakage and dust formation. Items requiring mechanical treatment are transferred indoors to the dedicated mechanical area.

Cable may be subject to stripping or granulation. The cable granulation plant is fully enclosed and fitted with a bag filter to control dust. The filter air is recirculated back into the process so that there are no point-source emissions from the process. Outputs are kept segregated, with plastics treated as POPs waste. Filter residues are collected and sent off-site, ensuring dust is contained within the system.

Selected WEEE will be subject to mechanical treatment including size reduction and subsequent sorting and segregation into distinct material fractions for recovery and recycling. All mechanical treatment will be undertaken within the WEEE Treatment building.

The WEEE mechanical treatment plant will be served by a dust extraction and abatement system which vents externally via a bag filter designed to ensure less than 5mg/m³ of dust will be emitted at the point of discharge. An Air Emissions Risk Assessment (AERA) is included with the permit application demonstrating that potential PM10 and PM2.5 emissions from the dust abatement stack will not exceed the relevant long-term or short-term standards for the protection of human health at any location of relevant exposure.

The site building is used for the storage of unsorted WEEE and the outputs of sorting, dismantling and mechanical treatment. Recyclable outputs, such as metals and processed cables, are stored inside a building or appropriate containers to prevent dust escape. In the external WEEE Storage Area, most materials are kept under a weatherproof canopy. Dedicated containers are provided for large WEEE, fridges, batteries, fluorescent tubes and POPs wastes. Segregated skips are used for different WEEE streams, and covered bays are provided for non-recyclable items within ROROs. Across both internal and external areas, storage arrangements are designed to keep materials contained, protected from the elements and managed in a way that minimises dust risks.

The maximum permitted annual tonnage of waste accepted at the site shall not exceed 75,000 tonnes. Throughput of WEEE for mechanical treatment will be limited to 5000 tonnes per year. Treatment of hazardous WEEE shall not exceed 10 tonnes per day (not including manual treatment, refurbishment and repair). Storage of hazardous waste shall not exceed 50 tonnes at any time.

Supporting Documents

The information provided within this application is in accordance with pre-application advice from the Environment Agency received 22nd October 2025, reference EPR/CB3807CF/P002. The enhanced pre-application advice is included within this application.

The application provides the following documents:

- EP1 Cover Letter, providing key details of the application;
- EP2 Contents Page, providing an overview of the application content;
- EP3 Non-Technical Summary, providing a summary of the variation application;
- EP4 Application Forms, including forms A, C2, C4 and F1;
- EP5 Operator Information, providing the details requested in the application forms
- EP6 Pre-Application Information, providing details of the enhanced pre-application advice received;
- EP7 Management Plans, providing the operating techniques, environmental management plans and risk assessments demonstrating the site will operate in accordance with the relevant appropriate measures; and
- EP8 Letter of Authority, providing names of those authorised to sign on SUEZ's behalf.

A summary of the overall environmental risk from the site and appropriate required Management Plans are summarised below.

Hazard	Overall Risk	Detailed Management Plan Required?
Odour	Low	No - not requested by the EA during pre-application discussions.
Noise	Low	No - not requested by the EA during pre-application discussions.
Pests	Low	No - not requested by the EA during pre-application discussions.
Dust	Medium	Yes - requested by the EA during pre-application discussions. Dust Management Plan and AERA provided.
Mud/Litter	Low	No - not requested by the EA during pre-application discussions.
Fire	Low	Yes - requested by the EA during pre-application discussions.

The site will continue to operate in accordance with the SUEZ accredited environmental management system, this will ensure that adequate management systems will be used at the site including procedures for monitoring, accident prevention and control of emissions.