

Chickenhall Lane Materials Recycling Facility (MRF)

Planning application HCC/2022/0071, for a Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) with capacity to process c. 135,000 tpa of dry recyclable material, new accesses to the highway and associated infrastructure on land off Chicken Hall Lane, Eastleigh, Hampshire.

Cali Sparks, sustainable transport planner for Eastleigh Borough Council

Policy Context

The TA does not reference the emerging Hampshire Local Transport Plan 4

The Annual tonnage figures are inconsistent within the Transport Assessment – this should be clarified to ensure that the developments full extent is considered and mitigated. There is mention that the site capacity would potentially increase in the future – this should be considered at the earliest stage to ensure that proposed improvements are able to provide sufficient capacity for peak traffic generation. A condition to limit the operation of the site may be required.

Site Layout and Design

The plans propose two separate accesses into the site, the first to provide for staff and visitors and the second via a weighbridge for HGV deliveries. Visibility splays at these junctions should be provided.

The junction where the bypass loop meets the staff car park should be clearly marked and signed to ensure that drivers are aware of conflicting traffic movements. This is particularly important for drivers reversing out of the disabled bays.

At present there is no provision for pedestrians to safely reach the car parking spaces in the second row, the footway should be extended along side the staff parking area to provide access without having to walk over the grass landscaped area. Vehicle tracking for the car parking spaces to ensure that drivers can safely maneuver in and out without overrunning.

It is not clear from the site layout where the cycle parking facilities are to be provided. These should be in a convenient location which is well overlooked to increase safety and security.

It is not clear from the site layout where the 3 electric vehicle charging points are to be located – this detail should be provided.

Pedestrian Access

Walking Catchments have been provided which demonstrate the area within a reasonable walk of the site – this includes Eastleigh Railway Station and the town centre.

The footway which runs along the length of the publicly adopted section of Chickenhall Lane should be extended to the site to provide access, particularly for those with mobility issues. Whilst there is a grass verge this is not considered an attractive facility, and would push pedestrians onto the carriageway, where they are likely to come into conflict with HGVs.

Cycle infrastructure

The TA includes a plan showing cycle catchments area, this demonstrates that a large area of Eastleigh is within a reasonable cycle distance and stretches to the boundary with Southampton City. However, there is no dedicated provision or shared use facilities for cyclists along Chickenhall Lane where cycles may come into conflict with a higher number of HGVs.

Public Transport

Although the Site is not within 400m of a public transport service, there are a number of public transport services within a reasonable walk of the site. Bus services can be accessed via Eastleigh Bus Station in the town centre and the Bluestar 2 and 3 and Xelabus services X15 and X17 operate along Bishopstoke Road.

The site is also within a reasonable walk to Eastleigh Railway Station with services to Southampton, Portsmouth and London and beyond.

The two closest stops do not currently have shelters and with limited space on the footway it may not be possible to provide them in these locations however battery powered PRTI could be provided on the flags if HCC were willing to maintain.

Staff Travel Plan

The travel plan is provided alongside the TA – a monitoring fee for the assessment and evaluation of the travel plan should be secured covering a period of 3-5 years.

Trip Generation

The methodology used to calculate the trip rate appears to be reasonable although it is not based on survey data from other comparable sites.

The shift patterns of the site fall outside the network peak, this will help to reduce the impact of the site at the height of the congestions but will lead to extended peaks and higher volumes between peaks on the network.

Current Traffic Conditions and Routing

There is a statement on the HCC website <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/developers> regarding the use of traffic data for transport assessments:

‘The ongoing Coronavirus situation is affecting traffic levels and travel patterns in Hampshire. This affect has been pronounced since 16 March 2020. As a result, traffic volume surveys undertaken at this time will not robustly reflect traffic flows and network operation. On this basis, Officers will not be accepting any traffic volume survey data collected from that period until further notice.’

The use of Google Drive data is not considered as a robust assessment methodology and the screenshots used do not provide details of the period that is shown making it impossible to confirm if this is from the appropriate time-period. The level of congestion on Bishopstoke Road can be severe and traffic patterns in this area are well known and there is a range of data available that would be more appropriate and robust to use.

There is a Hampshire County Council traffic monitoring station along Bishopstoke Road which should provide data for 2019 so that the 2021 data can be compared with a more recent data set.

The majority of site traffic is predicted to travel towards Eastleigh, with a high proportion travelling towards the Twyford Road Roundabout, however the capacity of this junction has not been considered within the TA.

The TA has assumed that 75% Staff will access the site from the East as they are currently working at the existing Alton site and commute from Portsmouth. However, it is likely that staff commuting from Portsmouth would follow the M27, exiting at junction 5 and travelling along the A335 and Bishopstoke Road via Twyford Road Roundabout. This would increase the level of traffic turning west and would require all junction assessments to be recalculated to ensure that the impact of the development has been suitably assessed.