

PLANNING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE
23 MARCH 2021**PROPOSED WASTE WOOD RECYCLING AND EXPANSION
OF EXISTING COMPOSTING FACILITY AT CROOME FARM,
CROOME D'ABITOT, SEVERN STOKE, WORCESTERSHIRE**

Applicant

Croome Composting Ltd.

Local Member(s)

Mr P Middlebrough

Mr A I Hardman

Purpose of Report

1. To consider a County Matter planning application for a proposed waste wood recycling facility and expansion of existing composting facility at Croome Farm, Croome D'Abitot, Severn Stoke, Worcestershire.

Background

2. The application site occupies land adjacent to Croome Composting Ltd, which currently operates as a windrow composting site located at the former Defford Airfield base. The adjacent windrow site takes waste plant material (green waste) and then processes it into compost, which is then spread onto the owner's 840 acres (340 hectares) of agricultural land.
 3. This Committee originally granted planning permission for an open windrow green waste composting facility on a disused area of hardstanding that was formerly part of Defford Airfield on 31 March 2009 (County Planning Authority Ref: 08/000059/CM, Minute no. 632 refers).
 4. On 28 February 2013, this Committee granted planning permission for a part retrospective application to extend the area, increase the throughput from 6,000 to 10,000 tonnes per annum, and extend the delivery hours (CPA Ref: 12/000051/CM, Minute no. 823 refers).
 5. On 7 August 2018, the County Council granted planning permission for a retrospective proposal to extend the existing composting operations on site, in quantity processed and area (CPA Ref: 18/000016/CM). Conditions imposed included limiting the annual throughput to a maximum of 17,000 tonnes (condition 2) and to stipulate that the main vehicle access must be via Church Lane with access via Rebecca Lane restricted to emergency use only (condition 4).
 6. The applicant submitted a planning application on 26 August 2020 under CPA Ref: 20/000037/CM for "*Planning application made under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to vary condition 5 of planning*
-

permission ref: 18/000016/CM, so as to amend the operating hours". That application is subject to a separate report, which is pending determination by Members of the Planning and Regulatory Committee (see Agenda Item 6).

7. Planning application CPA Ref: 19/000041/CM, for proposed waste wood, soil and stone recycling facility and expansion of existing composting facility, was withdrawn in July 2020.

8. The current planning application CPA Ref: 20/000038/CM omits the soil and stone recycling facility and has a reduced red line site boundary to exclude woodland and the World War II buildings approximately 55 metres broadly to the east of the site.

The Proposal

9. Croome Composting Ltd. is seeking planning permission to incorporate a proposed waste wood recycling facility on land adjacent to the existing open windrow green waste composting facility and expansion of the existing composting facility. The applicant states that the proposal would complement the current procedural operations on the existing site and vary the type of waste material processed at the site.

10. The area of expansion comprises approximately 0.203 hectares of redundant and vacant unused concrete hardstanding, historically used for cleaning aeroplanes and located to the south of the existing windrow green waste composting facility.

11. An agricultural building in a poor state of repair is situated on the northern limit of the proposed red line site boundary bisecting the site and limiting movement between the existing composting site and the proposed development. In order to improve the function of the site and enable expansion of the current waste processing operations, the existing open sided steel frame agricultural building would be removed. The agricultural building is constructed using a modern rolled steel joist (RSJ) metal frame with Yorkshire boarding (timbers) above a concrete wall base. The floor is concrete. The roofing is corrugated composite roof sheeting and the barn is open sided at either end and currently used for the storage of agricultural machinery and woodchip.

12. The applicant states that the concrete hardstanding is in a good state of repair.

13. The cumulative site area of both the adjacent green waste composting facility and the proposed development equate to approximately 0.606 hectares.

14. The applicant states that their existing open windrow green waste composting facility at Croome Farm has become increasingly popular for customers, including Severn Waste Services / Mercia Waste Management who operate Worcestershire's Household Recycling Centres. The applicant states that Severn Waste Services / Mercia Waste Management make up approximately 98% of their current workload.

15. The proposed annual throughput of biodegradable compost (green waste) through both sites (existing and proposed), when combined would increase from the currently permitted maximum of 17,000 tonnes of material per annum (CPA Ref:

18/000016/CM, condition 2) to a maximum of 20,000 tonnes of material per annum, equating to a proposed annual increase of 3,000 tonnes of green waste material.

16. Green waste once delivered to site is piled into a heap in the southern part of the site, with the JCB Loadall and left for approximately 4 weeks and then shredded before being moved into windrows. The windrows measure approximately 4 meters in height by approximately 4 meters in width, with approximately 2 metres between each windrow. Once the green waste is in the windrow, it is monitored and then turned fortnightly dependant on the required temperature of the compost.

17. After approximately six weeks the compost would be sieved and screened then removed from the site for either spreading or alternatively stored on the farm pending spreading. The sieving process creates an oversize product which is put back in at the start of the process to be shredded again and to decompose further.

18. The application proposes to incorporate the ability to process waste wood on the area of hardstanding once the agricultural building has been removed. The existing green waste facility and the proposed waste wood recycling facility would be physically and operationally linked. The applicant is proposing that the facility processes a maximum of 5,000 tonnes of wood waste per annum, with an on-site limit of 500 tonnes at any one time. Storage of waste would be managed so that the site remains accessible.

19. The applicant states that wood waste would be imported to the site then manually separated to remove grade A wood from grade C wood. The grading refers to the quality of the wood, grade A is untreated wood and grade C includes painted or laminated wood. The applicant envisages that about 10 to 20% of the wood waste would be grade A wood. The sorted wood waste would be stored in separate stockpiles and once there is a sufficient amount for collection it would be tracked over by a JCB360 excavator crushing the waste wood to reduce its bulk and loaded into HGVs and exported off site for further processing. It is understood that the grade A waste wood is typically used for manufacture of products such as animal bedding, horticultural mulches, and the panel board sector, as well as a fuel in non-Waste Incineration Directive (WID) installations or manufacture of pellets / briquettes. as Grade C waste wood is typically used for as a biomass fuel in the generation of electricity and / or heat in WID compliant installations. If there was ever any grade D (contaminated wood) Severn Waste Services / Mercia Waste Management would arrange for this to be handled and removed, however, the applicant states that this should never get in the containers at the Household Recycling Centres, but there is a system in place if it does.

20. The applicant states that any unwanted waste (contaminates) such as any plastic and/or glass found in the wood waste and green waste would be put into skips by hand and then disposed of off-site by Severn Waste Services / Mercia Waste Management on a return trip to Hill and Moor landfill site. Metal would be collected from the waste material and separated into iron, aluminium, brass etc. and then sold. There would be no processing of unwanted waste at the site. The applicant states that the level of contamination is anticipated to be a very small amount (approximately 3 to 6 skips per year).

21. The land subject to this current application is not currently operational.

22. The applicant has stated that no lighting or new/replacement infrastructure would be required.

23. One person is employed at the site on a full-time basis presently, which would increase to two should planning permission be granted.

Site Access

24. The main access comprises of a gravel track accessed via Church Lane / Quay Lane (C2105), located approximately 1.8 kilometres broadly to the south of the main development site. The southern access point would be located approximately 540 metres broadly to the west of the A4104, which provides access to the Primary Route Network (PRN).

25. The applicant has stated that site access from the north of the site via Rebecca Road (C2056) would only be required in the event that access from the south should be severely flooded. Therefore, the applicant has set out that access arrangements would remain unchanged and in accordance with condition 2 of planning permission CPA Ref: 18/000016/CM and pending determination of planning application Ref: 20/000037/CM (see Agenda Item 6).

Operational Hours

26. The applicant proposes that operational hours would be in accordance with the proposed hours of operation as per planning application CPA Ref: 20/000037/CM, which is pending consideration and is proposed as follows:

“The development hereby approved shall only operate between the hours of 08:00 to 16:00 Mondays to Fridays with no operations including crushing, pulverising, shredding and chipping on Saturdays and Sundays, Bank Holidays or Public Holidays with the exception of deliveries which can be made to and dispatched from the site between the hours of 08:00 to 16:00 on Mondays to Fridays and between the hours of 10:00 to 16:00 on Saturdays only, with no deliveries on Sundays, Bank Holidays or Public Holidays”

The Site

27. The site is located approximately 8 kilometres broadly to the south of Worcester and 3.5 kilometres broadly to the west of Pershore.

28. The application site is located broadly to the west of the former Defford Airfield on an area of hardstanding, historically used for cleaning aeroplanes. A range of former World War II buildings in a poor state of repair are located outside of the application site (red line boundary) broadly to the east of the site, the nearest being approximately 104 metres away. Further workshops and stores are located approximately 93 metres broadly to the south of the site.

29. The site consists of one partially open sided agricultural barn measuring approximately 23 metres in length x 23 meters wide x 6.8 meters to the ridge and used to store machinery and wood chip. A second larger agricultural barn in good condition measures 46 meters in length x 25 meters wide x 9.8 meters to the ridge, this building is outside of the red line site boundary.

30. The site is generally open and set within a backdrop of trees and shrub, with open farmland to the west of the site. A pond is located broadly to the west of the existing site and set within plantation woodland.

31. The main access comprises of a gravel track via Church Lane / Quay Lane, approximately 1.8 kilometres broadly to the south of the main development site. The site can be accessed by Rebecca Road to the north of the site only in emergencies (CPA Ref: 18/000016/CM, condition 4), such as during severe flooding. Rebecca Road is an advisory cycle route linking to National Routes 45 and 442 of the NCN.

32. The site is predominantly located within Croome Park which is a designated Grade I Historic Park on the Historic England List of Historic Parks and Gardens. Part of Croome Park which includes Croome Court, a Grade I Listed Building, is a National Trust property and is open to members of the public. The park is of international importance as Capability Brown's first complete masterpiece. The application site is located within the registered park although this part of the park has suffered from wartime and post-war changes.

33. There are a number of Listed Building within the registered park, including the Grade I Listed 'Rotunda', located approximately 590 metres broadly west of the site, the Grade II Listed 'Urn' located approximately 700 metres broadly west of the site, the Grade II Listed 'Garden wall to Walled Garden to East of Croome Court and Gardener's Cottage in North-West Corner' located approximately 725 metres broadly west of the site, the Grade II Listed 'Priest House' located approximately 835 metres broadly west of the site, Grade II Listed Dunstall Court located approximately 890 metres broadly west of the site, the Grade II* Listed 'Owl House at South End of Lake', located approximately 1 kilometre broadly south-west of the site, the Grade I Listed 'Pershore (or London) Lodge and Gates' located approximately 670 metres broadly north-west of the site, and Grade I Listed Croome Court located approximately 975 metres broadly west of the site.

34. Access and parking for visitors to Croome Court is located to the north of the composting site via Rebecca Road.

35. Public Rights of Way (Footpaths CA-522 and SS-555) are located approximately 535 metres broadly west of the application site within Croome Park.

36. The site is located within approximately 2 kilometres of several Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) including Croome River, located approximately 1 kilometre broadly south-west of the site, Croome Perry Wood is located approximately 1 kilometre broadly to the north of the site and Porter's Ashbed (broadleaved woodland) is located approximately 1.5 kilometres broadly south-east of the site. Dunstall Common LWS and Marsh Common LWS are located approximately 1.8 kilometres broadly to the south of the application site. Croome Court LWS is located approximately 1 kilometre broadly to the west of the application site.

37. The termination of the northern access road (within the application red line site boundary) at the junction with Rebecca Road is approximately 0.5 kilometres broadly south of Croome Perry Wood. The termination of the southern access road (within the application red line site boundary) is at the junction with Church Lane / Quay Lane is located just within Dunstall Common LWS and Marsh Common LWS is located approximately 0.5 kilometres broadly to the south of that point.

38. The closest residential properties include Lincolns Farm Bungalow which is located approximately 550 metres broadly to the north-east of the site on the corner of the access road to the site and Rebecca Road. Croome Court is located approximately 850 broadly to the west of the application site. Keepers Cottage is located approximately 890 metres broadly to the north-west of the site.

39. A small section of the site's northern and southern access routes are located in Flood Zone 3 (a high flood risk zone). The vast majority of the site is located in Flood Zone 1 (a low flood risk zone).

Summary of Issues

40. The main issues in the determination of this application are:

- The waste hierarchy
- Location of the development
- Traffic and highways safety
- Historic environment
- Ecology and biodiversity
- Landscape and visual impact
- Residential amenity
- Water environment including flooding

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019)

41. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 19 February 2019 and replaces the previous NPPF published in March 2012 and July 2018. On 19 June 2019 the NPPF (2019) was updated to include a correction slip to remove paragraph 209a relating to on-shore oil and gas development, following the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government issuing a Ministerial Statement on 23 May 2019 due to the outcome of a legal judgment.

42. On 30 January 2021 the government published a consultation on draft revisions to the NPPF and a new National Design Code. The NPPF has been revised to implement policy changes in response to the Building Better Beautiful Commission "Living with Beauty" report. The draft National Model Design Code provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. The government expect the National Design Code to be used to inform the local design guides, codes and policies. The consultation on these documents closes on 27 March 2021. In light of the fact that the consultation has not yet closed or a revised NPPF or new National Model Design Code published, the Head of Planning and Transport Planning consider that very little weight should be afforded to these consultation versions of the documents in the determination of this planning application.

43. The NPPF (2019) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF (2019) is a material consideration

in planning decisions and should be read as a whole (including its footnotes and annexes)

44. The NPPF (2019) should be read in conjunction with the Government's planning policy for waste (National Planning Policy for Waste). Annex 1 of the NPPF states that *"the policies in this Framework are material considerations which should be taken into account in dealing with applications from the day of its publication"*.

45. The NPPF (2019) states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives (economic, social and environmental), which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives).

- **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- **an environmental objective** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

46. These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in the NPPF (2019); they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.

47. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the NPPF (2019) is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means:

- approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

48. The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

49. The following guidance contained in the NPPF (2019), is considered to be of specific relevance to the determination of this planning application:

- Section 2: Achieving sustainable development
- Section 4: Decision-making
- Section 6: Building a strong, competitive economy
- Section 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Section 9: Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 11: Making effective use of land
- Section 12: Achieving well-designed places
- Section 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

National Planning Policy for Waste

50. The National Planning Policy for Waste was published on 16 October 2014 and replaces "Planning Policy Statement 10 (PPS 10): Planning for Sustainable Waste Management" as the national planning policy for waste in England. The document sets out detailed waste planning policies and should be read in conjunction with the NPPF (2019), the Waste Management Plan for England and National Policy Statements for Waste Water and Hazardous Waste, or any successor documents. All local planning authorities should have regard to its policies when discharging their responsibilities to the extent that they are appropriate to waste management.

The Development Plan

51. The Development Plan is the strategic framework that guides land use planning for the area. In this respect the current Development Plan that is relevant to this proposal consists of the Adopted Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy Development Plan Document and the Adopted South Worcestershire Development Plan.

52. Planning applications should be determined in accordance with the provisions of the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF (2019) is a material consideration in planning decisions.

53. With regard to the weight to be given to existing policies adopted prior to the publication of the revised NPPF (2019), Annex 1 states "*existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)*".

Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy

54. The Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy policies that are of relevance to the proposal are set out below:

Policy WCS 1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development
Policy WCS 2: Enabling Waste Management Capacity
Policy WCS 3: Re-use and Recycling
Policy WCS 6: Compatible land uses
Policy WCS 8: Site infrastructure and access
Policy WCS 9: Environmental assets
Policy WCS 10: Flood risk and water resources
Policy WCS 11: Sustainable design and operation of facilities
Policy WCS 12: Local characteristics
Policy WCS 14: Amenity
Policy WCS 15: Social and economic benefits

South Worcestershire Development Plan

55. The SWDP (2016) covers the administrative areas of Worcester City Council, Wychavon District Council and Malvern Hills District Council. The SWDP policies that are of relevance to the proposal are set out below:

Policy SWDP 1: Overarching Sustainable Development Principles
Policy SWDP 2: Development Strategy
Policy SWDP 3: Employment, Housing and Retail Provision Requirement and Delivery
Policy SWDP 4: Moving Around South Worcestershire
Policy SWDP 5: Green Infrastructure broadly
Policy SWDP 6: Historic Environment
Policy SWDP 8: Providing the Right Land and Buildings for Jobs
Policy SWDP 12: Employment in Rural Areas
Policy SWDP 21: Design
Policy SWDP 22: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
Policy SWDP 24: Management of the Historic Environment
Policy SWDP 25: Landscape Character
Policy SWDP 28: Management of Flood Risk
Policy SWDP 29: Sustainable Drainage Systems
Policy SWDP 30: Water Resources, Efficiency and Treatment
Policy SWDP 31: Pollution and Land Instability

Draft Planning Policies

Emerging South Worcestershire Development Plan Review (SWDPR)

56. Worcester City Council, Wychavon District Council and Malvern Hills District Council are reviewing the SWDP. The SWDPR will cover the period to 2041. The

'Preferred Options' consultation version of the SWDPR was consulted on from 4 November to 16 December 2019.

57. The next step is to produce an Additional Preferred Options (Focused on Sustainability Appraisal) Consultation (Regulation 18), which is programmed for March-April 2021 prior to producing a Publication Consultation (Regulation 19), which is programmed for October – November 2021. The SWDPR would then be submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing, Community and Local Government for independent examination. The Secretary of State would then appoint an independent Planning Inspector to assess the 'soundness' and legal compliance of the plan. Once the plan is adopted it would replace the existing policies in the SWDP. Having regard to the advice in the NPPF (2019), Section 4, as the SWDPR is still at an early stage of preparation, only limited weight should be applied to the policies.

58. The SWDPR policies that, for the avoidance of doubt, are of relevance to the proposal are set out below:

Policy SWDPR 1: Employment, Housing and Retail Requirements

Policy SWDPR 2: The Spatial Development Strategy and Associated Settlement Hierarchy

Policy SWDPR 3: Strategic Transport Links

Policy SWDPR 4: Green Infrastructure

Policy SWDPR 5: Historic Environment

Policy SWDPR 7: Health and Wellbeing

Policy SWDPR 9: Non-Allocated Employment Development

Policy SWDPR 11: Employment in Rural Areas

Policy SWDPR 25: Design

Policy SWDPR 26: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy SWDPR 28: Management of the Historic Environment

Policy SWDPR 29: Landscape Character

Policy SWDPR 32: Management of Flood Risk

Policy SWDPR 33: Sustainable Drainage Systems

Policy SWDPR 34: Water Resources, Efficiency and Treatment

Policy SWDPR 35: Amenity

Policy SWDPR 36: Air Quality

Policy SWDPR 37: Land Stability and Contaminated Land

Other Documents

Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England (2018)

59. This Strategy is the first significant government statement in relation to waste management since the 2011 Waste Review and the subsequent Waste Prevention Programme 2013 for England. It builds on this earlier work, but also sets out new approaches to long-standing issues like waste crime, and to challenging problems such as packaging waste and plastic pollution. The Strategy is guided by two overarching objectives:

- To maximise the value of resource use; and
- To minimise waste and its impact on the environment.

60. The Strategy sets five strategic ambitions:

- To work towards all plastic packaging placed on the market being recyclable, reusable or compostable by 2025;
- To work towards eliminating food waste to landfill by 2030;
- To eliminate avoidable plastic waste over the lifetime of the 25 Year Environment Plan;
- To double resource productivity by 2050; and
- To eliminate avoidable waste of all kinds by 2050.

61. It contains eight chapters which address: sustainable production; helping consumers take more considered action; recovering resources and managing waste; tackling waste crime; cutting down on food waste; global Britain: international leadership; research and innovation; and measuring progress: data, monitoring and evaluation. Chapter 3 – 'Resource Recovery and Waste Management' is the most relevant chapter to this proposal.

62. This states that whilst recycling rates in construction have improved since 2000, from 2013 onwards recycling rates have plateaued. The government wishes to drive better quantity and quality in recycling and more investment in domestic recycled materials markets. The government wants to promote UK-based recycling and export less waste to be processed abroad. The government wish to:

- Improve recycling rates by ensuring a consistent set of dry recyclable materials is collected from all households and businesses;
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from landfill by ensuring that every householder and appropriate businesses have a weekly separate food waste collection, subject to consultation;
- Improve urban recycling rates, working with business and local authorities;
- Improve working arrangements and performance between local authorities;
- Drive greater efficiency of Energy from Waste (EfW) plants;
- Address information barriers to the use of secondary materials; and
- Encourage waste producers and managers to implement the waste hierarchy in respect to hazardous waste.

Waste Management Plan for England (2013)

63. The Government through Defra published the Waste Management Plan for England in December 2013. This Plan superseded the previous waste management plan for England, which was set out in the Waste Strategy for England 2007.

64. There are comprehensive waste management policies in England, which taken together deliver the objectives of the revised Waste Framework Directive, therefore, it is not the intention of the Plan to introduce new policies or to change the landscape of how waste is managed in England. Its core aim is to bring current waste management policies under the umbrella of one national plan.

65. This Plan is a high-level document which is non-site specific, and is a waste management, rather than a waste planning document. It provides an analysis of the current waste management situation in England and evaluates how it will support

implementation of the objectives and provisions of the revised Waste Framework Directive.

66. The key aim of this Plan is to work towards a zero-waste economy as part of the transition to a sustainable economy. In particular, this means using the “waste hierarchy” (waste prevention, re-use, recycling, recovery and finally disposal as a last option) as a guide to sustainable waste management.

The Government Review of Waste Policy England 2011

67. The Government Review of Waste Policy in England 2011 seeks to move towards a green, zero waste economy, where waste is driven up the waste hierarchy. The waste hierarchy gives top priority to waste prevention, followed by preparing for re-use, recycling, other types of recovery (including energy recovery) and last of all disposal.

Consultations

68. **Local County Councillor Paul Middlebrough** comments that access to this site should be consistent with arrangements for the Croome Composting Ltd. business on the adjacent site by using the southern access route for entrance and egress with vehicles then proceeding south a short distance to the A4104. There should be a prohibition of turning right from the southern exist past Dunstall Castle and access from Rebecca Road is inappropriate. Stresses that the local roads are not designed for the volumes of traffic and that vehicles should move to and from the A4104 as soon as possible.

69. **Local County Councillor Adrian Hardman** has made a joint comment on both planning application CPA Ref: 20/000037/CM and planning application CPA Ref: 20/000038/CM and stated that he is fine with both planning applications and has requested that the CPA determine them.

70. **Malvern Hills District Councillor Harrison** comments that there should be no burning on the site. He notes that the document (Emergency Routes Plan) shows that access is available from the north of the site from close to Croome Court and also from the access south through the Countrywide Farmers access from the Dunstall Common access.

71. He states that on behalf of the local resident’s access to this facility should only be from the A4104 turning onto the Dunstall Road for a short amount of time. He also believes that access from the site should only be via the southern entrance and turning left in line with all other traffic entering and exiting this site).

72. **Severn Stoke and Croome D`Abitot Parish Council** object to the proposal raising strong concerns about this application but would not object if these concerns were attended to.

73. They comment that both applications (CPA Ref: 20/000037/CM and CPA Ref: 20/000038/CM) affirm in the supporting statements that vehicles would predominantly access from the south unless in case of emergency. This detail is welcomed. However, in some sections/other documents this emphasis is lacking. It is the Parish Council’s understanding that it is an existing condition that all vehicles have to access to and leave the site via the southern route (Route A as detailed in

these current applications) at all times (i.e. A4104). The Traffic Management Plan (1045-25298.pdf) makes no mention of this existing requirement of access/exit from the south, nor how this would be monitored for compliance. They comment that the emergency routes plan unduly highlights the northern route (Route B) as a viable option. They comment that it is also not made clear what constitutes an 'emergency' during which use of route B would be permitted, nor who would monitor this 'event'.

74. Severn Stoke and Croome D`Abitot Parish Council request that access and exit solely to/from the south (via the A4104) (Route A on the submitted plans) is inserted as a condition.

75. They comment that the summary of the Noise Impact Assessment states that 'unwanted waste is disposed of onsite'. Parish Councillors request clarification about what material would be disposed of and how. They are concerned that there should be no burning on site. The Parish Council would also like reassurance that any materials leaving the site for disposal must exit southbound.

76. The existing Noise Impact Assessment has been undertaken based on readings for existing shredding and chipping operation. However, the Parish Council are concerned that the new proposed (expanded) wood waste recycling operation has not been properly assessed, because it is not yet in situ/operation.

77. Future likely noise levels have not been properly demonstrated and assumptions should not be made about their impact on local residents. The Noise Impact Assessment, used for both applications, suggests a theoretical background noise level of +9dB. This seems to be very close to the official guidance threshold of 10dB which details a 'high likelihood of significant adverse impact on health and wellbeing'. It would seem sensible, given this close proximity to the official guidance 'threshold', that further investigation is undertaken as to the impacts of the proposed chipper expansion.

78. Both applications state in the Supporting Statements ('Background and Site Description para 2.1') that the closest residential settlements are Besford Village to the east of the site and Defford Village to the south of the site. However, there is no mention of the houses on The Granary and the Bungalow both situated on Rebecca Road by the north entrance to the airfield. The planned operations and changes must consider impacts on these properties and must properly mitigate to prevent nuisance.

79. **Defford & Besford Parish Council** object to the planning application.

80. They comment on the lack of an Odour Assessment and recommend that should the application be approved they would like to see an enforceable condition put in place to ensure that all HGV traffic uses the southern entrance (via the A4014) rather than Rebecca Road (northern entrance) which is commonly used. Rebecca Road is a popular cycle route. They also raise concerns that the operating hours could be further extended, as the site is close to residential properties who already have their weekends spoilt from noise pollution for the industrial machinery operating on the site, particularly during the summer months and the Parish Council would like to see the operating hours unchanged

81. **Malvern Hills District Council** comment that the access is and remains a sensitive issue locally. It is important that controls are maintained and brought forward or else imposed in support of any new permission to secure existing arrangements for routing traffic to and from the site. Access to the facility should only be from the A4104 turning onto the Dunstall Road for a short amount of time, as has previously been the District Council's position. Access from the site should likewise only be via the southern entrance and turning left in line with all other traffic entering and exiting this site, as exists. No alternative access arrangement is supported.

82. They note Severn Stoke and Croome D`Abitot Parish Council's response that draws attention to one of the documents regarding the waste which is being disposed on site and how. At the time of accessing relevant documents they have not been able to view whether 'no burning on site' is already conditioned, although they assume it does. Either way a condition to control this aspect should accompany any subsequent permission.

83. They note the concerns raised by Severn Stoke and Croome D`Abitot Parish Council and also note that statutory consultees are best placed to consider such matters.

84. With regard to ecology they note that the removal of the modern agricultural building may impact on nesting birds in the absence of appropriate mitigation. There could be impacts of additional lighting if this is not adequately controlled. The District Council's Ecologist has advised that there is a pond within approximately 200 metres of the development, although judged to be below average for Great Crested Newts they would expect precautionary working measures to be put in place.

85. The submitted report recommends the installation of bird and bat boxes outside of the red line boundary. They have recommended that clarity is sought on their proposed location.

86. Should permission be granted for this development, they recommended that a strict condition to control additional lighting should be attached and conditions imposed to secure precautionary working methods Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and for biodiversity compensation and enhancement measures including location, type and number of enhancement measures.

87. **The District Conservation Officer** has no objections to the proposal and note that the proposal to extend the composting site would see the removal of an agricultural building on the site and an additional area of existing concrete would be assigned for composting.

88. They comment that the site is within the Grade I Registered Park and Garden of Croome Court, on its eastern side. It is not visible from the Court or any of the associated listed buildings.

89. They note the relevant heritage policies for the scheme are contained within the NPPF (2019) Section 16 and the Local Plan Policies SWDP 6 and SWDP 24 pertaining to the Historic Environment and its management, which require the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets.

90. The Heritage Statement submitted is considered comprehensive and the conclusions that are reached are appropriate. They consider that it is agreed that there would not be an adverse impact on the listed buildings in the vicinity nor the majority of the registered parkland. They note that there would be some increase in agricultural activity on the site which would, therefore, increase the agricultural activity within the eastern edge of Croome Park, but they note that this is not considered to be detrimental due to the activities already present.

91. **The District Archaeology** has no comments.

92. **The County Archaeologist** comments that the submitted Heritage Statement is inadequate as it does not fully discuss the impact of the development on the undesignated heritage assets in the vicinity. Having assessed the information in the Heritage Statement, they are content that there are no adverse impacts on the historic environment.

93. They also note that the 20th century WWII buildings (recorded as undesignated heritage assets in the County Historic Environment Records as part of Defford Airfield) have now been removed from the application. The removal of the heritage assets from the redline boundary removes the concerns raised on the previous application, although it is a shame that there is no longer an undertaking to prevent further dilapidation of those buildings.

94. **Historic England** comment that they do not wish to offer any comments and that the views of the County Planning Authority's specialist conservation and archaeological advisors should be sought as relevant.

95. **The Gardens Trust** notes that the submitted Heritage Statement states that *"the sound and smell would be consistent with the existing composting facility and that the noise from the processing plant would be quieter than the M5 Motorway"*. They are concerned that the proposed operations and motorway noise are not comparable. They state that sudden crashing bangs, crushing noises and pneumatic drills and sudden load intermittent noises at the waste facility would attract the attention of the 300,000 annual visitors to the Grade I Registered Park at Croome. They comment that the site is partially visible from a footpath within the Registered Park and Garden. They state that if officers are satisfied that the facility would not visually impact upon the Registered Park and Garden then they have no further comments.

96. **The National Trust** has no objections to the proposal and welcome the removal of the stone and soil processing operations as per withdrawn planning application CPA Ref: 19/000041/CM. They consider that the removal of the 20th century agricultural building would be beneficial to this part of the Croome historic landscape and welcome that no new permanent infrastructure is proposed and that a noise management plan has been submitted.

97. **The County Ecologist** has no objections to the proposal and notes that initial concerns with regard to the potential for adverse impacts from noise and light appear to have been considered through the updated noise and ecological assessments. They further note that no new external lighting is proposed and that operational hours would be limited to the same as that proposed in application CPA

Ref: 20/000037/CM. They are supportive of recommendations set out in Section 5 of the updated Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

98. The County Ecologist recommends that Statement of Conformity style conditions are used to verify the appropriate location, number, specification and installation of features as proposed by the applicant's ecologist. They have recommended a number of conditions relating to demolition of buildings or structures which may be used by breeding birds, and also the need for ecological enhancement measures including bird and bat boxes.

99. In response to concerns from local residents in relation to impacts upon otters the County Ecologist states that there are very few records of otter in the area (closest otter record supplied by Worcestershire Biological Records Centre is located approximately 1.1 kilometres south-east of the site and dated 2002), but otters are highly mobile animals with significant home ranges. The application was supported by an updated Ecological Assessment. While this report does not explicitly consider otter, the report's objectives are clear that this survey aimed to determine both presence of, and potential of the site to support, protected animals. An assessment has been made of the direct and indirect impacts to surrounding habitats including adjacent woodland, waterbodies and watercourses which otter are reasonably likely to make use of. The Ecological Assessment states:

100. Within a 2-kilometre radius of the site are priority habitats such as Areas of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland known as Croome Perry Wood, and areas of traditional orchards, lowland meadows & wood pasture & parkland. The proposed composting and waste wood processing unit is situated on hard standing with a small area of species poor grassland and will not adversely affect the identified priority habitat areas of ancient woodland or traditional orchards in any way... The woodland plantation in the wider area would all remain unaffected by the proposal and the proposal allows for a buffer around the proposed site as it is not directly adjacent to the woodland.... In conclusion the habitats to be directly affected by this proposal are of low ecological value for wildlife due to their lack of diversity of plant species and permanent vegetative cover and as such none of the habitats identified on the proposed site are likely to support any protected species such as breeding birds, bats, great crested newts or badgers.

101. The County Ecologist recognises the concerns of local residents and considers that there is the possibility that otters may make use of the adjacent woodland as part of their wider range. But the County Ecologist also consider the mitigation within the application to avoid or reduce adverse impacts from noise and light on surrounding habitats as being sufficient.

102. **Worcestershire Wildlife Trust** have no objections to the proposal stating that they are pleased that the noisiest elements of the proposal have been removed (stone crushing) and the area of the proposed extension has been reduced. In view of this, the Wildlife Trust do not consider the proposals, if carefully implemented would cause harm to the nearby ecological receptors, therefore, they are content to defer to the opinions of the County Ecologist for all on-site biodiversity issues.

103. **The County Landscape Officer** has no objection and concludes that the proposal would not impose harm to the landscape and wider setting of the scheme.

104. **The County Highways Officer** has no objections, subject to the imposition of a condition restricting the combined throughput to 20,000 tonnes of compost per annum and 5,000 tonnes of wood per annum with an on-site limit of 500 tonnes at any one time; operational hours are controlled by condition in accordance with application CPA Ref: 20/000037/CM, which is pending determination; controlling access arrangements to ensure that the access is only from the southern access except where severe flooding affects this access. One additional person would be employed, and staff would arrive at site before the first HGV arrives in the morning and depart after the last one in the evening. These trips would occur outside the AM and PM peak hours.

105. **The Environment Agency** have no objections to the proposal, subject to the imposition of conditions requiring impermeable surfacing for the areas waste would be stored / processed and drainage condition requiring a sealed drainage system. They comment that Croome Composting are in possession of a Standard Rules Environmental Permit. The increase in throughput from a maximum of 17,000 tonnes annually to a maximum of 20,000 tonnes annually is within the permitted limit of 75,000 tonnes annually.

106. They note a variation to the existing Environmental Permit would be required to increase the size of the permitted area and add waste types and activities to include wood. A fire prevention plan would also be required to mitigate the risk from waste wood. With regard to drainage the Environment Agency state that the wastes must be stored on an impermeable surface with sealed drainage and note that the infrastructure on site is old and it must be demonstrated that the concrete is fit for purpose and that there is sufficient capacity to store surface water run-off and that run off must be treated as waste.

107. The Environment Agency have confirmed that the Environmental Permit would control emissions, including noise, dust and odour. They go on to state that they have received no substantiated complaints to date in relation to emissions. The Environment Agency also state that due to the location of the site (there are no sensitive receptors within 250 metres of the site) they would not require a bio-aerosol assessment or monitoring under the Environmental Permit.

108. They comment that the current storage for surface water onsite cannot be demonstrated to be fit for purpose and is currently non-compliant with permit conditions. An extension to the operating area for the site would necessitate a larger, fit for purpose drainage system to be installed onsite.

109. They comment that the Environmental Permit requires operations to be at least 10 metres from any watercourse and that currently the concrete platform drains to the pond. They state that this is currently non-compliant with the Environmental Permit and a 'sealed sump', or appropriate alternative should be installed. The Environmental Permit states that *"The storage, physical treatment and composting of wastes shall take place on an impermeable surface with sealed drainage system"*.

110. With regard to flood risk the Environment Agency comment that their Flood Map is based on generalised 'Jflow' modelling at this location. This places the western section of the application site within Flood Zones 2 and 3. However, the submitted Flood Risk Assessment suggests that the development is wholly located within Flood Zone 1. In line with the Environment Agency's climate change

guidance, the submitted Flood Risk Assessment has concluded that the site at low risk of flooding based on an estimate of potential flood levels. These were derived by using topographical data. The Environment Agency are satisfied, in this instance, that the site is located well above expected flood levels, with an appropriate allowance for climate change, and may be considered as within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of fluvial flooding). The Environment Agency consider that the Flood Risk Assessment is appropriate to the size and nature of the watercourse, particularly given the relatively small expected flow volumes, and that flood depths would be likely to be relatively shallow and short-lived.

111. The Environment Agency note there are two access and egress routes to the north and south of the site, and that if one is inundated then there is a secondary escape route. However, flood maps indicate that flooding could affect both routes simultaneously. Whilst the Environment Agency would not object on this basis, they recommend that the County Planning Authority should ensure they are satisfied that the proposed emergency access and egress arrangements are acceptable and appropriate. In conclusion, they state that have no objections to the proposed development with regard to fluvial flood risk. They advise consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority to consider the surface water drainage (quantity, including peak rainfall allowances) details.

112. Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) (Air Quality, Odour and Dust) have no objections to the proposal, commenting that the Environmental Permit issued by the Environment Agency would seek to minimise nuisance from noise, dust and odour. WRS have reviewed the relevant documents which accompanied the planning application and comment that the procedures within the documents appear suitable to control dust emissions from both the construction and operational phase of the proposed development.

113. Subject to composting operations being carried out in line with Best Available Techniques as per the Environmental Permit conditions and guidance issued by the Environment Agency, odour is unlikely to pose a significant issue. WRS have reviewed records and there do not appear to be any reports of mal-odour associated with existing operations at Croome Composting Ltd. Increasing the throughput of green waste at the site is not likely to pose a significant concern. They note that nuisance issues from odour, dust, noise should be controlled via conditions within any associated Environmental Permit issued by the Environment Agency.

114. **WRS (Noise)** have no objections to the proposal stating they have reviewed the submitted Noise Impact Assessment and note that the Noise Impact Assessment states “*A BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 assessment level of +8 dB indicated that adverse impacts on the health and well-being of residents at the Nearest Sensitive Receptor from the existing site operations are possible but, in the context of the local noise climate at the Nearest Sensitive Receptor) location, were likely to be low*”. WRS also note that the Noise Impact Assessment states that “*The assessment level of the proposed extension of the site was slightly higher at +9 dB and this indicated that any increase in potential adverse impacts at the Nearest Sensitive Receptor was likely to be negligible when compared to existing operations. The proposed change of usage hours is not considered to create any additional noise impacts*”.

115. WRS make reference to the fact that a subjective audibility assessment of site activities at the *Nearest Sensitive Receptor* location (Rebecca Road) concluded that

site noise was generally imperceptible except for high level impact and mechanical (L_{Amax} events) when certain sources were active.

116. WRS note that the Noise Impact Assessment states that “*any potential adverse impacts would be limited to residents in external amenity areas with internal, habitable rooms likely to experience no impact, even in an open window scenario*”.

117. WRS are happy to support the above conclusions as the assessment levels of new operations are only +1dB above the assessment level associated with existing operations which is likely to be imperceptible. In addition, the Noise Impact Assessment appears to have been carried out in a conservative manner presenting a worst-case scenario. Screening is carried out periodically rather than continuously and as such noise impacts are likely to be intermittent and relatively short lived. WRS are satisfied that the Noise Impact Assessment has been carried out in accordance with relevant guidance and standards. They therefore have no objections or adverse comments to make in relation to noise.

118. They state that the site is in possession of an Environmental Permit issued by the Environment Agency and it is expected that additional waste operations would also be regulated by the Environment Agency.

119. They have reviewed their records and note that two complaints have been received in relation to noise from operations at Croome Composting in 2016 and 2020. In 2016 the matter was resolved and in 2020 the complaint was unsubstantiated and not necessarily attributable to the operations at the site.

120. **The South Worcestershire Land Drainage Partnership** have no comments and note that the Lead Local Flood Authority should be consulted regarding waste and major planning applications.

121. **The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)** have no objections and note that there is no change to the existing hard surfaces and that the existing surface water management is not being altered.

122. **The County Public Health Practitioner** has no objections noting that the Health Impact Assessment does not highlight any significant risk to health and wellbeing.

123. **Western Power Distribution** confirm that their apparatus is located in the vicinity to the application site (11 kV Overhead Electric Line and underground services). The applicant must comply with the requirements of the Health & Safety Executive guidance HS(G) 47, Avoiding Danger from underground services / Health & Safety Executive’s guidance: GS6 ‘Avoidance of Danger from Overhead Electric Lines’. They state that the use of mechanical excavators in the vicinity of their apparatus should be kept to a minimum. The applicant should contact Western Power Distribution should any diversions be required.

124. **West Mercia Police** have no concerns or objections to the proposal.

125. The **Health and Safety Executive (HSE)** does not advise against the granting of planning permission in this case.

126. **Wales and West Utilities** has no objections stating that they have no apparatus in the vicinity of the development site.

Other Representations

127. The application has been advertised in the press, on site, and by neighbour notification. To date there have been 5 letters of objection commenting on the proposal. The main comments are summarised below: -

Noise

- Concerns raised that onsite operations are to include wood chipping.
- Concern about noise from the operation of industrial machinery and associated noise from the depositing, processing, and movement of material.
- Concerns raised that noise monitoring has not been undertaken in peak season.
- Concerns raised that noise from industrial machinery and HGV movements infringes their right to a tranquil rural environment.
- Concern raised that annual assessment of impact of noise is insufficient.

Highways and traffic safety

- Concerned about increased HGV movements.
- Transportation movements of HGV vehicles and other vans and trailers depositing waste material at the site.
- The 2018 planning application CPA Ref: 18/000016/CM proposed that the HGVs would only use the southern entrance A4104 not the northern entrance (Rebecca Road).
- HGVs are entering Croome Composting site via Rebecca Road violating existing planning agreements. For example: -
 - Thursday 21 January 2021 Biffa HGV in 10:25 hours out at 10:50 hours
 - Monday 25 January 2021 Clearaway HGV exited at 11:20 hours
 - Tuesday 26 January Biffa HGV in at 10:00 hours and exited 11:00 hours
 - Wednesday 27 January Red/White HGV in at 09:30 hours and exited at 10:30 hours Wednesday 27 January Wrubble HGV in 10:45 hours and exited at 11:00 hours. In addition, small local tipper trucks are entering and leaving the site via the northern access on a regular basis, which is just a small example of what is going on generally.

Residential amenity

- Paragraph 2.1 of the supporting statement 'Waste wood recycling and extension of composting' states that the closest residential settlements are Besford and Defford villages. However, 'The Granary' off Rebecca road together with 'The Bungalow at Lincoln's Farm' is the closest residential settlement comprising of five family homes. The local resident is situated just over 500 metres from the Croome Composting site.
- Lack of an Odour Impact Assessment.
- Lack of any statistics regarding any Bio-aerosols monitoring past and present.

- Bio-aerosol emissions are hazardous to health.

Operational matters

- The nature of the waste wood is not described.
- Crushing waste wood with a JCB 360 has not been assessed.
- Waste should be sorted at source to minimise carbon dioxide emissions and air pollution.
- Reference is made to material coming from Household Recycling Centres, but it is not clear if wood from other sources would be received.
- Description of the processing to be undertaken is not well specified with vague references to compacting and crushing.
- Reference is made to sorting but no detail is given to how this would be accomplished.
- The difference between “grade A” and “grade C” wood is referred to but not explained. Is there a “B grade wood”?
- It is said that “A grade” wood would be removed for biomass but this is not explained. i.e. would this wood be removed without processing for treatment elsewhere or would it be processed on site?
- What is meant by “Biomass”? Is this a reference to material to be used in combustion-based heating systems? If so, they suspect the level of heavy metal contamination would need to be determined. Whose responsibility would this be?
- It is stated that processed wood would be removed from the site by lorry. If both “grade A” and “grade C” wood is crushed but is to be used for different purposes how would this be segregated prior to treatment and kept separate for post processing?
- Section 4.1.4 of the supporting statement states that “The green waste would be processed and mixed with the compost produced on the adjacent site...” Why is it not possible to incorporate this waste with the green waste currently entering the site so that all can be composted together?
- Waste wood collected from municipal recycling centres would include material that has already been pre-treated for a range of applications. In addition to bare wood this might be expected to include various composites e.g. MDF, Plywood and Veneers which would contain adhesives, preservatives and in some cases plastic material. These different feedstocks would have different mechanical properties suggesting that a range of processing approaches might be needed, and specific pre-sorting required.
- If some of these processed materials find their way into products intended for combustion, there is the potential for toxins to be emitted in flue gasses.
- A more significant concern should be the presence of preservative biocides. These chemicals are designed to be toxic to target species but are not totally selective and are hence licenced for use in specific situations which take account of leakage rates into the environment.

- The act of crushing, shredding or chipping wood containing such chemicals greatly increases the surface area to volume ratio of the product formed such that leakage rates into the environment would be far higher than would have been originally envisaged. This leads to a risk of toxic leachate run off posing significant environmental risks, particularly where crushed material is to be stored in the open and exposed to rainfall.
- In addition to the potential for leachate run off the generation of fine particles poses a risk to process operators. Some hardwood dusts are intrinsically carcinogenic, couple this with the possibility of carcinogenic preservatives in the wood to be treated and there is potential for significant risk to the health of staff if suitable PPE is not provided. This risk is not considered in the application.
- Specific concern should be given to the potential treatment of end of life agricultural wood, e.g. fencing.
- Historically such wood was treated with arsenic containing preservatives, while more recently this has switched to the use of copper-based compounds, the potential exists for the leakage of serious heavy metal contaminants into the environment.
- The water content of the waste wood to be treated (<20%) would be far lower than that seen in the green waste currently treated (>40%), as result there is a potential risk for both fire and explosion when the material is processed and fine particles generated. The risks associated with wood dust are detailed in an HSE information sheet [1] but have not been considered in the application.
- More detailed information is given in an HSE guidance document entitled “Safe handling of combustible dusts” [2] which includes details covering legal requirements (paragraphs 7-9) and the risk assessments that should be conducted. These points do not appear to have been considered by the applicants.
- Its appreciated that the explosion risks referred to are greatest within a confined space and that the proposal describes work to be conducted outside. However, there is still the potential for explosions to occur within the confines of any equipment used and also for the formation of flammable clouds of suspended dust particles.

Natural Environment -

- *“They comment that the Environment Agency’s consultation response highlights issues specifically relating to the need to ensure that the concrete surface on which the proposed work is carried out is properly sealed and drains into an appropriately lined catchment pond to prevent leakage of toxic chemicals into the environment. They note that the Environment Agency have stated that even the existing composting application does not currently meet this requirement. They comment that the significance of the risk of pollution is highlighted by an article in the Sunday Times which reports the environmental damage caused by the pesticide Methy Bromide leaking from treated wooden pallets into water courses. That article specifically cites the impact on water voles.*
- *They are not aware of any local water vole populations and as a National Trust volunteer photographer they have been photographing otters in Croome Park for the last 3 years. They comment that the UK otter population collapsed in the 1970’s as a result of inappropriate use of environmentally persistent pesticides*

and it is only over the last decade that they have successfully recolonised all counties in England. They comment that it would be extremely regrettable if this planning application were to be passed without ensuring that the safeguards the Environment Agency specify are in place before the treatment of waste wood is allowed on a site which is in close proximity to a brook and where effluent might pose serious a risk to the resident otter population”.

Historical environment

- The heritage assets of the WWII aircraft buildings and surrounding land would be an asset to future generations, as the need for open space and recreational land has been highlighted in this pandemic. Thus, the public footpaths over this land, formerly Dunstall Common, should be reinstated for the use of residents and the numerous visitors to Croome Court.

Other matters

- Government proposals for farmers envisage payment for environmental protection and improvement. The applicant proposes further industrialising a rural site for commercial gain.

The Head of Planning and Transport Planning’s Comments

128. As with any planning application, this application should be determined in accordance with the provisions of the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant policies and key issues have been set out earlier.

The Waste Hierarchy

129. The proposal relates to changes to and an extension of an existing waste management facility. National Planning Policy for Waste states that positive planning plays a pivotal role in delivering this country’s waste ambitions through:

- Delivery of sustainable development and resource efficiency...by driving waste management up the waste hierarchy
- Ensuring that waste management is considered alongside other spatial planning concerns...recognising the positive contribution that waste management can make to the development of sustainable communities
- Providing a framework in which communities and businesses are engaged with and take more responsibility for their own waste, including by enabling waste to be disposed of, and
- Helping to secure the re-use, recovery or disposal of waste without endangering human health and without harming the environment.

130. The Government Review of Waste Policy in England 2011 seeks to move towards a green, zero waste economy, where waste is driven up the waste hierarchy. The waste hierarchy gives top priority to waste prevention, followed by preparing for re-use, recycling, other types of recovery (including energy recovery) and last of all disposal. This is reiterated in the Waste Management Plan for England (2013) and is built on in the Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England (2018), which states that *"the waste hierarchy, which ranks options for waste management, has driven some progress...instead we have increased our rates of*

recovery and recycling and generated much more energy from waste. We want to shift away from waste towards resource efficiency and will do this by focusing not just on managing waste, but on managing the resources which become waste".

131. The Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy sets out a number of objectives. Objective WO3 of the Waste Core Strategy seeks to make driving waste up the waste hierarchy the basis for waste management in Worcestershire.

132. Furthermore, paragraph 148 of the NPPF (2019) states that *"the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure"*.

133. The Croome Composting facility is an existing 'recycling' facility as defined in the Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy and the proposed extension would enable the management of green waste to be diverted from landfill (disposal) moving waste up the waste hierarchy. Furthermore, the Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that as the proposed development would also involve the processing and bulking up of wood waste in preparation for transfer and subsequent recycling by specialist operators it would comply with the objectives of the waste hierarchy, helping towards achieving sustainable waste management.

Location of the development

134. The National Planning Policy for Waste seeks to drive waste management up the waste hierarchy, and to secure the re-use of waste without endangering human health or harming the environment. Section 5 includes criteria for assessing the suitability of sites for new or enhanced waste management facilities and Appendix B sets out locational criteria. The Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy is broadly in accordance with these principles and the National Planning Policy for Waste.

135. This planning policy direction is also reflected in the National Planning Policy for Waste, which states *"waste planning authorities should...consider a broad range of locations including industrial sites, looking for opportunities to co-locate waste management facilities together and with complementary activities...give priority to the re-use of previously-developed land, sites identified for employment uses, and redundant agricultural and forestry buildings and their curtilages"*

136. The Waste Core Strategy (WCS) sets out a geographic hierarchy for waste management facilities in Worcestershire. The hierarchy takes account of patterns of current and predicted future waste arisings and resource demand, onward treatment facilities, connections to the strategic transport network and potential for the future development of waste management facilities. The hierarchy sets out 5 levels with the highest-level being Level 1 'Kidderminster zone, Redditch zone and Worcester zone'. The proposal is located in level 5 of the geographic hierarchy for waste (the lowest level).

137. The proposal would involve incorporating an existing area of concrete hardstanding located adjacent to the existing operational green waste composting facility to increase the overall site area by approximately 0.203 hectares. This would

enable the site to accommodate an increase of 3,000 tonnes per annum of green waste material processed at the site and also to enable 5,000 tonnes per annum of waste wood to be processed at the site.

138. Policy WCS 3 of the Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy states that waste management facilities that enable re-use or recycling of waste will be permitted at all levels of the geographic hierarchy where it is demonstrated that the proposed location is at the highest appropriate level of the hierarchy.

139. Policy WCS 6 of the Waste Core Strategy states that proposals for waste management facilities will be permitted where it is demonstrated that they are located on a type of land that is identified as compatible in Table 7. Table 7 indicates that open windrow composting would be compatible with redundant agricultural or forestry buildings or their curtilage or sites with current use rights for waste management purposes. It also states that contaminated or derelict employment land (which includes former airfields) are a compatible land use where strongly justified. In relation to the proposed wood waste recycling facility, Table 7 also states that other unenclosed facilities are compatible on redundant agricultural or forestry buildings or their curtilage; sites with current use rights for waste management purposes contaminated; or derelict employment land where strongly justified.

140. The Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that there would be strong justification for locating a relatively small expansion of an existing open windrow composting operation to include waste wood recycling on a former airfield by virtue of the demonstrable benefits of the location, including the suitability of the concrete base for the composting, subject to conditions and the site's distance from sensitive receptors.

141. The Head of Planning and Transport Planning is, therefore, satisfied that the principle of the location of the development has already been established and that the proposal is considered to be consistent with the objectives and Policies WCS 3 and WCS 6 of the Waste Core Strategy.

Traffic and Highways Safety

142. Paragraph 109 of the NPPF (2019) states "*development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe*".

143. As set out earlier under the 'Consultations' heading and under the 'Other Representations' heading in this report, concerns have been expressed including that the development would result in an increase in traffic movements and that HGVs are using the northern route to exit and enter the site contrary to condition 4 of CPA ref: 18/000016/CM

144. The applicant states that the worst-case scenario for HGV movements associated with the wood waste processing would be approximately 10 HGV movements per day (5 HGVs entering the site and 5 HGVs exiting the site per day). However, this assumes a lighter load of 5 tonnes rather than the likely 10 tonne loads and also assumes that there would be no back loading. Back loading refers to

mapping out routes to ensure goods are transported on every trip. The applicant considers that backloading would likely be common.

145. With regard to the additional HGV movements associated with the proposed extended composting operations, the applicant estimates that there would be approximately 150 loads in per annum, with no loads out of the finished product (compost), as this is used on the adjacent farm. This equates to approximately 0.5 load in per day or approximately 1 HGV entering the site per day and 1 HGV exiting the site per day.

146. The County Highways Officer has undertaken a robust assessment of the planning application and has raised no objections to the proposal subject to the imposition of conditions limiting the throughput, restricting the operational hours, and controlling access arrangements to ensure that the access is only from the southern access except where severe flooding affects this access.

147. The Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that the proposed increase in throughput would be a relatively small increase and would not pose a significant impact on the local highway network. Traffic movements to and from the site would take place outside of the AM and PM peak hours.

148. Local residents have recently raised objections regarding HGVs using the northern route to and from the site, contrary to extant condition 4 (CPA Ref:18/000016/CM), which explicitly restricts this route in favour of the southern access route in order to take traffic off village roads to the north of the site and to ensure that deliveries are routed via the major roads to the south. The applicant and contractors have been contacted by the Worcestershire County Council's Monitoring Officer who has been assured by the applicant that any breaches will cease immediately.

149. District Councillor Harrison sought further clarification regarding the operational management of the existing composting site relating to burning material at the site and site access arrangements to the facility, being made only from the southern entrance and turning left in line with all other traffic entering and exiting the site. The applicant has stated that no burning would take place on site and that the Environmental Permit restricts this activity. Furthermore, extant condition 8 previously attached to approved CPA Ref:18/000016/CM states that "*There shall be no fires lit and no wastes burnt on the site*". Should planning permission be granted a condition is recommended to be imposed to this effect.

150. With regard to access arrangements the applicant has stated that all HGV movements would be via the southern route except in emergencies and recommended that a condition be attached requiring traffic to confirm their travel route when on the weighbridge, as part of their entry paperwork and that any breaches should be reported directly to the site manager detailing registration numbers, dates and times so that any potential abuse of the Traffic Management Plan can be dealt with promptly. The applicant goes on to state that all Severn Waste Services' / Mercia Waste Management's drivers are subject to a discipline system that can be applied to any breaches. Should planning permission be granted, the Head of Planning and Transport Planning recommends the imposition

of conditions requiring an updated Traffic Management Plan and vehicles to enter and exit the site from the southern access point, and only to enter and exit the site from the northern access point in an emergency.

151. Malvern Hills District Council notes that access arrangements remain a sensitive issue locally and access to the facility should only be from the A4104 turning onto the Dunstall Road for a short amount of time. Access from the site should likewise only be via the south entrance and turning left in line with all other traffic entering and exiting this site, as exists. No alternative access arrangement is supported.

152. Should planning permission be granted, the site would be monitored in terms of compliance with any planning conditions that may be imposed. Even if a breach of condition 4 of CPA Ref: 18/000016/CM has occurred, with vehicles using the northern route, this issue can be monitored as potential events arise. The applicant has been made aware of the issues relating to vehicular movements raised by local residents and have confirmed that they would adhere to the conditions.

153. The proposed development would continue to access the site from the previously conditioned (CPA Ref:18/000016/CM) southern access using an existing private track. The private track connects to Church Lane / Quay Lane (C2105). Church Lane / Quay Lane provides direct access to the A4104, which is located approximately 540 metres to the east of the proposed southern access point. The County Highways Officer states that the entrance off the main highway has sufficient width for HGVs to pass each other as they were designed to facilitate military vehicles around the site before and during WWII.

154. The County Council, as the County Planning and Waste Planning Authority has a Planning Monitoring and Enforcement Officer who investigates alleged breaches of planning control in relation to minerals and waste management development including breaches of condition. When breaches of condition take place the County Council has a range of enforcement powers available to establish whether a breach of planning control has taken place, what harm is being caused as a result of the breach, how to remedy the situation and whether it is expedient to take enforcement action.

155. Planning enforcement action is discretionary and takes place when the breach is causing significant planning harm or when negotiations to resolve the breach, once it is identified, do not produce required results, and only if taking action is considered to be the wider public interest.

156. Taking into account the comments of the County Highways Officer, the Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that material concerns raised regarding traffic and highways safety have been adequately addressed. However, in order to ensure acceptable accordance with the development, the Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that conditions should be imposed requiring vehicles to enter and exit the site from the southern access point, and only to enter and exit the site from the northern access point in an emergency. Subject to the imposition of this condition and conditions limiting the operational hours, restricting the throughput of waste material and requiring an updated Traffic Management Plan, the Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that the proposal would be acceptable in

terms of traffic and highways safety.

Historic Environment

157. The site is predominantly located within Croome Park which is a registered Grade I Historic Park on the Historic England List of Historic Parks and Gardens. Part of Croome Park which includes Croome Court, a Grade I Listed Building, is a National Trust property and is open to members of the public. The park is of international importance as Capability Brown's first complete masterpiece. The application site is located within the registered park although this part of the park has suffered from wartime and post-war changes. There are also a number of Listed Buildings associated with the park as outlined in paragraph 33 of this report.

158. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a general duty as respects to listed buildings in the exercise of planning functions. Subsection (1) provides that *"in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses"*.

159. Paragraph 190 of the NPPF (2019) states that *"local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal"*.

160. Paragraphs 193 and 194 of the NPPF (2019) states that *"when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of: ...b) assets of the highest significance, notably registered parks and gardens...should be wholly exceptional"*.

161. There is no statutory definition of setting for the purposes of Section 66 (1) of the Listed Buildings Act. Annex 2 of the NPPF (2019) describes the setting of a heritage asset as *"the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral"*. It goes on to describe significance for heritage policy, stating that this is *"the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting..."*.

162. The PPG at Paragraph Ref ID: 18a-013-20190723 states that *"the extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual relationship between the asset and the proposed development and associated visual / physical considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part in the assessment of impacts on setting, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust, smell and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each..."*.

163. The proposal involves an extension to the existing composting operations at Croome Farm by approximately 0.203 hectares equating to a combined total of 0.606 hectares.

164. Historic England comment that they do not wish to offer any comments and that the views of the County Planning Authority's specialist conservation and archaeological advisors should be sought as relevant.

165. The District Conservation Officer have no objections commenting that although the site is within the Grade I Registered Park and Garden of Croome Court which is located on the sites eastern side, it is not visible from the Court or any of the associated listed buildings. They consider that the Heritage Statement submitted is comprehensive and that the conclusions reached are appropriate and concur that there would not be an adverse impact on the listed buildings in the vicinity nor much of the registered parkland. They acknowledge that there would be some increase in agricultural activity on the site which would increase agricultural activity within the eastern edge of Croome Park but consider that this would not be detrimental due to the activities already taking place.

166. The County Archaeologist comments that the removal of the heritage assets from the redline boundary removes the concerns raised on the previous application and that having assessed the information in the Heritage Statement, they are content that there are no adverse impacts on the historic environment and raise no objections to the proposal.

167. The Gardens Trust have concerns relating to noise they state that sudden crashing bangs, crushing noises and pneumatic drills and sudden load intermittent noises at the waste facility would attract the attention of the 300,000 annual visitors to the Grade I registered park at Croome. They comment that the site is partially visible from a footpath within the Registered Park and Garden but note that if officers are satisfied that the facility would not visually impact upon the Registered Park and Garden then they have no further comments.

168. With regard to the Garden Trusts' comments above, it is noted that the County Landscape Officer has no objections and concludes that the proposal would not impose harm to the landscape and wider setting of the scheme.

169. The National Trust originally sought clarification on the proposed operations

and how the 360 Excavator would be used to reduce the size of the waste wood in terms of noise. In response, the applicant has stated that the grab on the 360 Excavator would only be used as a grab to move, stack or spread out the wood before it is tracked over by the 360 Excavator. The wood would then be collected into a pile, by the JCB Loader, then transported to the stockpile. The applicant has confirmed that the grab would never be used as a basher due to noise implications and that it would not be fit for that particular purpose. Subsequently, the National Trust raised no objections to the proposal and welcome the removal of the stone and soil processing operations as per withdrawn planning application CPA Ref: 19/000041/CM. They consider that the removal of the 20th century agricultural building would be beneficial to this part of the Croome historic landscape and welcome that no new permanent infrastructure is proposed and that a Noise Management Plan has been submitted.

170. WRS (noise) have no objections commenting that the Noise Impact Assessment appears to have been carried out in a conservative manner presenting a worst-case scenario and that they are satisfied that the noise impact assessment has been carried out in accordance with relevant guidance and standards, indicating that noise levels would increase by a modest 1db in connection with the proposed increase in green waste throughput only.

171. The application was accompanied by a Heritage Statement which concluded that the proposal would have no or extremely low adverse effects on the surrounding heritage assets. It states that none of the heritage assets within the registered park and garden are visible from the site and vice versa. This is because in the eastern part of the park there is a ridge which prohibits any wider views of the land to the east which includes the application site. Notwithstanding this, a stretch of footpath in the registered park has a partial view of the development in winter months but is located over 500 metres away from the proposal. This view would be of waste wood and compost, which are natural colours and would be viewed against the backdrop of the large agricultural building. The site would be completely screened by the existing woodland as soon as leaves are on the trees in the spring / summer months. Whilst the site is located in the registered park, the site and its immediate surrounding are already modern in their appearance limiting the impact of the proposal on the registered park. The odour is not considered likely to have any impact on Croome Court House and the Garden and Park around Croome Court. The proposal would cause a slight increase of processing noise and noise from delivery vehicles (a difference of 1 dB); however, this would not be excessive and given the prevailing wind and existing background noise from the M5 Motorway this is not considered likely to cause any issues. Notwithstanding this the operator would maintain Noise and Odour Management Plan which would require that site operations are monitored and any complaints or issues that are reported are properly investigated and remedies sought.

172. In view of the above matters, the Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that the proposals would lead to 'less than substantial' harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets.

173. Paragraph 196 of the NPPF (2019) states that *"Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage*

asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use."

174. The Government's PPG at Paragraph 020 Reference ID: 18a-020-20190723 confirms that *"public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress...Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and should not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits"*.

175. The Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that as the proposal would move waste up the waste hierarchy, increasing the amount of waste material that could be recycled, the public benefits of the proposal outweigh the less than substantial harm to the heritage asset.

176. Based on the advice of the District Conservation Officer, Historic England, the County Landscape Officer, the Gardens Trust, National Trust and the County and District Archaeologists and in view of this assessment against the relevant Paragraphs in the NPPF (2019), the Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact upon heritage assets subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

Ecology and Biodiversity

177. Section 15 of the NPPF (2019), paragraph 170 states that *"planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment", by a number of measures including "protecting and enhancing...sites of biodiversity...(in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures"*.

178. Paragraph 175 of the NPPF (2019) states that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply four principles (a. to d.), this includes: *"if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused"*; and *"development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity"*.

179. The site is located within 2 kilometres of several Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) including Croome River LWS, located approximately 1 kilometre broadly south-west of the site, Croome Perry Wood LWS is located approximately 1 kilometre broadly to the north of the site and Porter's Ashbed (broadleaved woodland) LWS is located approximately 1.5 kilometres broadly south-east of the site. Dunstall Common LWS and Marsh Common LWS are located approximately 1.8 kilometres broadly to the south of the application site. Croome Court LWS is located approximately 1 kilometre broadly to the west of the application site.

180. The termination of the northern access road (within the applications red line site boundary) at the junction with Rebecca Road is approximately 0.5 kilometres broadly south of Croome Perry Wood LWS. The termination of the southern access road (within the applications red line site boundary) at the junction with Church Lane / Quay Lane is located just within Dunstall Common LWS and Marsh Common LWS is located approximately 0.5 kilometres broadly to the south of that point.

181. The submitted Updated Ecological Assessment states that all the trees and shrubs in the wider area of the site would be retained and unaffected by the proposal, and the development allows for a buffer around the proposed site as it is not directly adjacent to the woodland plantation. The Assessment states that no protected species or habitats were identified within the proposed development area, but a precautionary approach is recommended due to the other habitats in the wider area. As such the modern agricultural building should be dismantled outside of the main bird nesting season. Due to the size and location of the proposed development any nationally or locally designated or designated sites within the surrounding area will not be affected. The Assessment recommends the erection of at least four bird boxes (to include two artificial swallow nests and two Wood Stone boxes) and two bat boxes.

182. Worcestershire Wildlife Trust have been consulted due to the proximity of the site to LWSs, and have no objections to the proposal stating that they are pleased that the noisiest elements of the proposal have been removed (stone crushing) and the area of the proposed extension has been reduced. In view of this, the Wildlife Trust do not consider the proposals, if carefully implemented would cause harm to the nearby ecological receptors, therefore, they are content to defer to the opinions of the County Ecologist for all on-site biodiversity issues.

183. The County Ecologist has been consulted and notes that initial concerns with regard to the potential for adverse impacts from noise and light appear to have been considered through the updated noise and ecological assessments. They further note that no new external lighting is proposed and that operational hours would be limited to the same as that proposed in application Ref: 20/000037/CM. They are supportive of recommendations set out in Section 5 of the updated Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

184. The County Ecologist recommends that Statement of Conformity style conditions are imposed to verify the appropriate location, number, specification and installation of features as proposed by the applicant's ecologist set out in Section 5 of the updated Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA).

185. In response to concerns from local residents in relation to impacts upon otters the County Ecologist considers that there is the possibility that otters may make use of the adjacent woodland as part of their wider range. But the County Ecologist also consider the mitigation within the application to avoid or reduce adverse impacts from noise and light on surrounding habitats as being sufficient.

186. In light of the above matters, the Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that the proposal would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on

ecology and biodiversity at the site or on the wider area subject to the imposition of conditions relating to drainage, timing of the demolition of buildings and structures to avoid the bird breeding season, installation of bird and bat boxes and a statement of conformity .

Landscape and Visual Impact

187. The application site is predominantly located within Croome Park which is a registered Grade I Historic Park on the Historic England List of Historic Parks and Gardens. Part of Croome Park which includes Croome Court, a Grade I Listed Building. The application site is located within the registered park, although this part of the park has suffered from wartime and post-war changes, including the existing concrete hardstanding.

188. The County Landscape Officer has been consulted and has raised no objections and comments that the proposal would not impose harm to the landscape or the wider setting of the scheme.

189. The Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that the proposed demolition and removal of the existing dilapidated agricultural building would improve upon the current visual nature of the site, especially when viewed from the nearest Public Rights of Way (Footpaths CA-522 and SS-555). Furthermore, any views of the site from these Public Rights of Way would be distant, located approximately 535 metres west of the site, transient and would be seen in the context of the existing composting operations on the site. The application site and the adjacent composting site are surrounded on three sides by woodland and is well screened by existing mature trees / woodland and vegetation.

190. Based on the advice of the County Landscape Officer, the Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable impact upon the character and appearance of the local area.

Residential Amenity

191. The closest residential properties include Lincolns Farm Bungalow which is located approximately 550 metres broadly to the north-east of the site on the corner of the access road to the site and Rebecca Road. Croome Court is located approximately 850 broadly to the west of the application site. Keepers Cottage is located approximately 890 metres broadly to the north-west of the site.

192. As set out under the 'Other Representations' heading of this report, concerns have been expressed about a number of issues, including noise, odour, and lighting, pollution, burning of material, bio-aerosols, and the potential of explosions at the site

193. The application was accompanied by a Noise Impact Assessment, Odour Assessment and Health Impact Assessment. The Noise Impact Assessment identifies a 1 dB difference between the existing operations and proposed operations at the nearest sensitive receptors and this impact was likely to be negligible. A subjective audibility assessment of site activities at the nearest sensitive receptor location (Rebecca Road) concluded that site noise was generally imperceptible except for high level impact and mechanical when certain sources were active. Any potential adverse impacts would be limited to residents in the external amenity areas

with internal, habitable rooms likely to experience no impact, even in an open window scenario. The Assessment also notes that the level of activity at the site varies from day to day with regular gaps in the operation, depending on the season and supply and demand factors. It recommends mitigation in the form of a Noise Management Plan, which could include measures such as regular maintenance of site machines and site speed limits.

194. The Odour Assessment concludes that the proposal would not have a significant odour impact on Croome Court, the registered park and garden or nearby residential properties as the proposal is for a relatively small increase to the existing green waste throughput (approximately 17.6%), and no new odour sources would be introduced as there are no significant odours associated with waste wood. Any minor odours such as 'damp wood' are only likely to be detectable within a few metres of the source. The proximity of composting operations to sensitive receptors would not change, and the site operator has not received any complaints with respect to the odour since composting commenced on the site.

195. The Health Impact Assessment does not identify any significant negative health and wellbeing impacts associated with the proposal.

196. Paragraph 183 of the NPPF states that *"the focus of planning policies and decisions should be on whether proposed development is an acceptable use of land, rather than the control of processes or emissions (where these are subject to separate pollution control regimes). Planning decisions should assume that these regimes will operate effectively"*.

197. Paragraph Reference Paragraph 50 Reference ID: 28-050-20141016 of the Government PPG elaborates on this matter, stating that *"there exist a number of issues which are covered by other regulatory regimes and waste planning authorities should assume that these regimes will operate effectively. The focus of the planning system should be on whether the development itself an acceptable use of the land and the impacts of those uses, rather than any control processes, health and safety issues or emissions themselves where these are subject to approval under other regimes. However, before granting planning permission they will need to be satisfied that these issues can or will be adequately addressed by taking the advice from the relevant regulatory body"*.

198. Paragraph 180 of the NPPF (2019) states that *"Planning...decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development"*.

199. The Environment Agency regulate the existing green composting site operation under an Environmental Permit. The Environment Agency would also control operations at the proposed site via an Environmental Permit. The Environmental Permit regulates, and controls emissions, where relevant, to land air and water including noise, dust and odour by adherence to the following criteria:

- General Management of the site;

- Permitted activities e.g. operations including the treatment of waste wood;
- Waste Acceptance (quantity and type of waste);
- Emissions to land, water and air (including odour, noise, vibration and litter relevant to the 'operational area');
- Fire Prevention Plan; and
- Monitoring, Records and Reporting.

200. With regard to concerns raised about the potential for bio-aerosols, the nearest residential property is located approximately 550 metres broadly north-east of the application site. The Environment Agency states that they have not received any substantiated complaints to date in relation to emissions and that due to the location of the site and the distance to the nearest residential receptor they would not require a bio-aerosol assessment or monitoring under the environmental permit. A successful permit application would be subject to the site having the appropriate infrastructure including appropriate impermeable surfacing and suitable sealed drainage system to cater for waste storage and treatment areas.

201. County Public Health Practitioner has no objections noting that the Health Impact Assessment does not highlight any significant risk to health and wellbeing.

202. Worcestershire Regulatory Services comment in relation to odour impacts that they have no objections subject to operations being carried out in line with Best Available Techniques as per the Environment Permit conditions and guidance. They state that odour is unlikely to pose significant issues and that they have reviewed their records and reiterate that no reports of mal-odour associated with the existing operations at Croome Composting Ltd. Have been made. Furthermore, they state that increasing the throughput of green waste at the site is not likely to pose a significant concern. In addition, nuisance issues from odour, dust, noise should be controlled via conditions within any associated Environmental Permit issued by the Environment Agency.

203. Worcestershire Regulatory Services in relation to noise impacts comments that they have no objections to the proposal, and they have reviewed their records and can confirm that they have not received any complaints associated with the existing operations at Croome Composting Ltd. They comment that they are satisfied with the concluded assessment levels stated within the submitted Noise Impact Assessment being only +1dB above the assessment level associated with existing operations, which is likely to be imperceptible and, therefore, have a negligible impact on the nearest residential receptor, even in an open window scenario.

204. With regard to concerns from local residents regarding the burning of material and the potential of explosions at the site. The extant planning permission CPA Ref: 18/000016/CM, condition 8 restricts the lighting of fires and the burning of waste on the site. A condition is recommended to this effect. With regard to the potential for explosions it is noted that the Environment Agency via the Environmental Permit for the site would control the site operations and a fire prevent plan would also be required.

205. The Head of Planning and Transport Planning recommends that should

planning permission be granted conditions should be imposed restricting the waste throughput of the site, operational hours, construction / demolition hours, access arrangements, no sale of compost from the site, no fires lit and no waste burnt on the site, restricting the erection of external lighting and the development to be carried out in accordance with the Odour Management Plan.

206. Taking into account the comments of the County Public Health Practitioner, Environment Agency and Worcestershire Regulatory Services, the Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that the proposal would have no adverse impact on residential amenity or that of human health, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

Water Environment including Flooding

207. A Flood Risk Assessment accompanied the application, as required by Paragraph 163 and Footnote 50 of the NPPF (2019), as part of the application site's northern and southern access routes are located in Flood Zone 2 (a medium flood risk zone) and Flood Zone 3 (a high flood risk zone), and the site's western boundary also shown to be located in Flood Zones 2 and 3 as identified on the Environment Agency's Indicative Flood Risk Map

208. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment states that the perceived food risk to the site is considered to be very low. The site has been in operation for many years and historically has not been affected by flooding from the Bourne Brook to the west of the site. The Bourne Brook lies approximately 1.4 metres below the lowest point on site and approximately 6.1 metres below the highest level on the site. The actual operational site chosen is above the flood level and offers evacuation by using higher land. The Flood Risk Assessment identifies the main southern access route as the primary escape route, with a second option as the northern access to Rebecca Road, and a third and fourth option to the east of the site, albeit these routes would link to the south and northern access roads.

209. With regard to flood risk the Environment Agency comment that their Flood Map is based on generalised modelling at this location. This places the western section of the application site is within Flood Zones 2 and 3. However, the submitted Flood Risk Assessment suggests that the development is wholly located within Flood Zone 1. The Flood Risk Assessment has concluded that the site at low risk of flooding based on an estimate of potential flood levels. These were derived by using topographical data. The Environment Agency are satisfied, in this instance, that the site is located well above expected flood levels, with an appropriate allowance for climate change, and may be considered as within Flood Zone 1. The Environment Agency consider that the Flood Risk Assessment is appropriate to the size and nature of the watercourse, particularly given the relatively small expected flow volumes, and that flood depths would be likely to be relatively shallow and short-lived.

210. The Head of Planning and Transport Planning notes that the proposed development is classified as 'less vulnerable', as identified by Table 2: 'Flood risk vulnerability classification' of the Government's PPG (Paragraph 066 Reference ID: 7-066-20140306). Table 3: 'Flood risk vulnerability and flood zone 'compatibility'' of the PPG (Paragraph 067 Reference ID: 7-067-20140306) identifies that all development is appropriate in Zone 1 and the Sequential Test and Exception Test are not required.

211. The Environment Agency go onto note there are two access and egress routes to the north and south of the site, and that if one is inundated then there is a secondary escape route. However, flood maps indicate that flooding could affect both routes simultaneously. Whilst the Environment Agency would not object on this basis, they recommend that the County Planning Authority should ensure they are satisfied that the proposed emergency access and egress arrangements are acceptable and appropriate. In conclusion, they state they have no objections to the proposed development with regard to fluvial flood risk. They advise consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority to consider the surface water drainage (quantity, including peak rainfall allowances) details.

212. The applicant states that *“the access to the north could be used in ‘the event of an emergency’, for which flooding has been highlighted. To put this into context, the emergency access route to the north of the application site would only be used when there is exceptional flooding, which the applicant states last occurred in 2007. The use of the access to the north is therefore considered to be a rarity”*.

213. Given that Croome Composting is an existing operation, the proposal would only increase the number of staff on site by approximately 1, with the majority of the access routes in Flood Zone 1. The Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that the emergency access and egress arrangements are acceptable in this instance.

214. With regard to drainage, the Flood Risk Assessment states that the composting operations onsite have existing drainage arrangements, with surface water run-off collected in reception pools on the site, which act as a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS), and dirty water is drained to a sealed reception pool before soaking away through reed bed pools and then onto surrounding fields. The proposed drainage strategy associated with this application is to connect to the existing drainage system.

215. South Worcestershire Land Drainage Partnership have been consulted and wish to make no comments on the application but recommend that the Lead Local Flood Authority is consulted. The Lead Local Flood Authority have raised no objections as there is no change to the existing hard surfaces and that the existing surface water management is not being altered. However, the Environment Agency comment that the current storage for surface water onsite cannot be demonstrated to be fit for purpose and is currently non-compliant with permit conditions. An extension to the operating area for the site would necessitate a larger, fit for purpose drainage system to be installed onsite. In view of this, the Environment Agency have no objections to the proposal, subject to the imposition of conditions requiring impermeable surfacing for the areas waste would be stored / processed and drainage condition requiring a sealed drainage system. Conditions are recommended to this effect.

216. With regards to concerns from local residents relating to the potential risk of the discharge of hazardous materials via cracks in the concrete hard-standing area and into the wider catchment, the Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that the imposition of conditions recommended by the Environment Agency, outlined above would satisfactorily mitigate any potential adverse impact as a result of a permeable concrete hardstanding.

217. In view of the above matters, the Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that the proposal would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the water environment or flooding, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

Other Matters

Economic Impact

218. The NPPF (2019) states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development through three overarching objectives (economic, social and environmental). In particular the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should *"help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development"*.

219. In addition, the NPPF at Paragraph 83 states that the *"Planning policies and decisions should enable:*

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;*
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;"*.

220. The composting site has been operating since 2009. The current proposal seeks to increase the throughput at the site in order to address the increasing popularity of the waste management service and expand and diversify the extent of the current composting business by enabling the processing and recycling of waste wood in combination with an extension to the applicants adjacent composting business.

221. The applicant states that the facility would support the local recycling infrastructure and provide recycling facilities for local councils and private companies alike. One person is employed at the site on a full-time basis presently, which would increase to two should planning permission be granted.

222. The Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that the proposal would contribute to sustainable economic growth in accordance with the NPPF (2019) and this weighs in its favour.

Human Rights Act 1998

223. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998 (as amended) states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life. A public authority cannot interfere with the exercise of this right except where it is in accordance with the law and is necessary (amongst other reasons) for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. Article 1 of Protocol 1 of the Act entitles every natural and legal person to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions.

224. The law provides a right to deny planning permission where the reason for doing so is related to the public interest. Alternatively, having given due

consideration to the rights of others, the local planning authority can grant planning permission in accordance with adopted policies in the development plan.

225. All material planning issues raised through the consultation exercise have been considered and it is concluded that by determining this application the County Planning Authority would not detrimentally infringe the human rights of an individual or individuals.

Conclusion

226. The applicant is seeking planning permission to incorporate a proposed waste wood recycling facility on land adjacent to the existing open windrow green waste composting facility and expansion of the existing composting facility at Croome Farm, Croome D'Abitot, Severn Stoke, Worcestershire. The applicant states that the proposal would complement the current procedural operations on the existing site and vary the type of waste material processed at the site.

227. The Croome Composting facility is an existing 'recycling' facility as defined in the Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy and the proposed extension would enable the management of green waste to be diverted from landfill (disposal) moving waste up the waste hierarchy. Furthermore, the Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that as the proposed development would also involve the processing and bulking up of wood waste in preparation for transfer and subsequent recycling by specialist operators it would comply with the objectives of the waste hierarchy, helping towards achieving sustainable waste management.

228. The Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that there would be strong justification for locating a relatively small expansion of an existing open windrow composting operation to include waste wood recycling on a former airfield by virtue of the demonstrable benefits of the location, including the suitability of the concrete base for the composting, subject to conditions and the site's distance from sensitive receptors. The Head of Planning and Transport Planning is, therefore, satisfied that the principle of the location of the development has already been established and that the proposal is considered to be consistent with the objectives and Policies WCS 3 and WCS 6 of the Waste Core Strategy.

229. In terms of traffic and highways safety, concerns raised regarding control of the existing northern access and the safety of the proposed southern access have been reviewed by the County Highways Officer, who has no objections to the proposal. It is considered that a condition should be imposed to limit the northern access to an emergency access, and for primary access to be from the southern access point only. This condition would also require a sign to be erected at the site directing drivers to exit the site to the south and to turn left towards the A4104.

230. Subject to the imposition of this condition, and conditions limiting the operational hours, restricting the throughput of waste material and requiring an updated Traffic Management Plan, the Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that the proposal would be acceptable in terms of traffic and highways safety.

231. The Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that as the proposal

would move waste up the waste hierarchy, increasing the amount of waste material that could be recycled, the public benefits of the proposal outweigh the less than substantial harm to the heritage asset. Based on the advice of the District Conservation Officer, Historic England, the County Landscape Officer, the Garden Trust, the National Trust, and the County and District Archaeologists, it is considered that the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact upon heritage assets subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

232. The Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that the proposal would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on ecology and biodiversity at the site or on the wider area subject to the imposition of conditions relating to drainage, timing of the demolition of buildings and structures to avoid the bird breeding season, installation of bird and bat boxes and a statement of conformity.

233. Based on the advice of the County Landscape Officer, the Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable impact upon the character and appearance of the local area.

234. Based on the advice of the County Public Health Practitioner, Environment Agency and Worcestershire Regulatory Services, the Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that the proposal would have no adverse impact on residential amenity or that of human health, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

235. The Head of Planning and Transport Planning considers that the proposal would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the water environment or flooding, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

236. Taking into account the provisions of the Development Plan and in particular Policies WCS 1, WCS 2, WCS 3, WCS 6, WCS 8, WCS 9, WCS 10, WCS 11, WCS 12, WCS 14 and WCS 15 of the Adopted Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy and Policies SWDP 1, SWDP 2, SWDP 3, SWDP 4, SWDP 5, SWDP 6, SWDP 8, SWDP 12, SWDP 21, SWDP 22, SWDP 24, SWDP 25, SWDP 28, SWDP 29, SWDP 30 and SWDP 31 of the Adopted South Worcestershire Development Plan, it is considered the proposal would not cause demonstrable harm to the interests intended to be protected by these policies or highway safety.

Recommendation

237. The Head of Planning and Transport Planning recommends that planning permission be granted for a proposed waste wood recycling and expansion of existing composting facility at Croome Farm, Croome D'Abitot, Severn Stoke, Worcestershire, subject to the following conditions: -

Commencement

- 1) The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission;**

Approved Plans

- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved drawings titled: "Croome Composting Site Plan August 2020**

Ref (PT 1.3)”; “Croome Composting Location Plan (Ref PT1.5)”; "Existing Block Plan August 2020 (Ref PT 1.6)", and “Croome Composting Emergency Routes Plan (PT2.1)”, except where otherwise stipulated by conditions attached to this permission;

Throughput

- 3) The combined annual throughput of green waste to be processed by the development hereby approved, together with the existing site as shown on drawing titled: “Existing Block Plan August 2020 (Ref PT 1.6)” shall not exceed 20,000 tonnes in any one calendar year (January to December) and records shall be kept for the duration of the operations on the site, and made available to the County Planning Authority within 10 working days of a written request being made;
- 4) The amount of imported wood waste to be processed by the development hereby approved shall not exceed 5,000 tonnes in any one calendar year (January to December) with an on-site limit of 500 tonnes on site at any one time and records shall be kept for the duration of the operations on the site, and made available to the County Planning Authority within 10 working days of a written request being made;

Waste Acceptance

- 5) No wastes other than those defined in the application shall be brought onto the site, namely waste wood and green waste;

Storage

- 6) There shall be no storage of any imported green waste, wood waste or processed compost outside the area of the hardstanding;

Vehicles, Access

- 7) Vehicle access and egress to and from the site shall be from Church Lane (C2105), which is located to the south of the development hereby approved shown as “Route A” on drawing titled: "Croome Composting Emergency Routes Plan (PT 2.1)";
- 8) Access to the site from Airfield Lane (C2056), which is located to the north of the development hereby approved, as shown on drawing titled: "Croome Composting Emergency Routes Plan (PT 2.1)", shall only be used during emergencies, which includes extreme flooding where the permitted southern access route, shown as “Route A” is impassable;
- 9) When commercial vehicles are exiting the site on to Church Lane (C2105) to access the Local Road Network, they shall turn left towards the A4104. A sign shall be erected at the site within 28 days of the date of this permission directing commercial vehicles exiting the site to turn left towards the A4104;
- 10) Notwithstanding the submitted details, within 3 months of the date of this permission, an updated Traffic Management Plan shall be submitted to the County Planning Authority for approval in writing. Thereafter, the

development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details;

Boundary Treatment

- 11) Details of any new boundary fences, walls and other means of enclosure to be constructed at the site shall be submitted to the County Planning Authority for approval in writing prior to being erected. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details;

Construction Hours

- 12) Construction and demolition works shall only be carried out on the site between 08:00 to 18:00 hours on Mondays to Fridays inclusive, and 08:00 to 13:00 hours on Saturdays, with no construction or demolition works on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays;

Operating Hours

- 13) The development hereby approved shall only operate between the hours of 08:00 to 16:00 Mondays to Fridays with no operations including crushing, pulverising, shredding and chipping on Saturdays and Sundays, Bank Holidays or Public Holidays with the exception of deliveries which can be made to and dispatched from the site between the hours of 08:00 to 16:00 on Mondays to Fridays and between the hours of 10:00 to 16:00 on Saturdays only, with no deliveries on Sundays, Bank Holidays or Public Holidays;

Compost Arrangements

- 14) The compost shall only be applied to land in the applicant's ownership as shown on the drawing titled: "Plan showing land in the applicants' ownership", which was submitted to the County Planning Authority on 21 September 2012;

- 15) No waste materials shall be accepted at the site directly from members of the public, and no retail sales of wastes or processed materials, including compost to members of the public shall take place at the site;

- 16) There shall be no fires lit and no wastes burnt on the site;

- 17) The maximum height of windrows and all stockpiles of material associated with the development hereby approved shall not exceed 4 metres in height and a height bar(s) shall be erected and maintained on site for the duration of the operations on the site;

- 18) Within 3 months of the date of this permission, details of any skips and containers to be stored on the application site, including their location and maximum stored height shall be submitted to the County Planning Authority for approval in writing. Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details;

Lighting

- 19) There shall be no external lighting associated with the proposal;

Pollution Control

- 20) The composted material shall be restricted to green waste material as defined in the Environmental Permit from the Environment Agency;
- 21) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the document titled: "Croome Composting Site - Odour Management Plan", dated September 2016. The Management Plan shall be maintained for the duration of operations on site and the associated written records shall be kept for the inspection by the County Planning Authority on request for the duration of operations on the site;
- 22) All loads of waste materials carried on HGV into and out of the development hereby approved shall be enclosed or covered so as to prevent spillage or loss of material at the site or on to the public highway;

Drainage

- 23) No development shall commence until a scheme for the provision and implementation of a surface water regulation system for waste storage and processing areas, including the use of a sealed drainage system, sump or otherwise appropriate measures, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details;
- 24) There shall be no discharge of trade effluent, sewage effluent or contaminated drainage from the site into any ditch or watercourse;
- 25) Within 3 months of the development hereby approved details and a specification of any new and replacement hard surfacing within the application site shall be submitted to the County Planning Authority for approval in writing prior to being constructed. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details;
- 26) Any facilities for the storage of oils, fuels or chemicals shall be sited on impervious bases and surrounded by impervious bund walls. The volume of the bunded compound shall be at least equivalent to the capacity of the tank plus 10%. If there is multiple tankage, the compound shall be at least equivalent to the capacity of the largest tank, vessel or the combined capacity of interconnected tanks or vessels plus 10%. All filling points, associated pipework, vents, gauges and site glasses must be located within the bund or have separate secondary containment. The drainage system of the bund shall be sealed with no discharge to any watercourse, land or underground strata. Associated pipework shall be located above ground and protected from accidental damage. All filling points and tank/vessels, overflow pipe outlets shall be detailed to discharge downwards into the bund;

Noise

- 27) All vehicles, plant and machinery operated within the site shall be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications at all

times, and shall be fitted with and use fully operational silencers;

Ecology and Biodiversity

28) No demolition of buildings or structures which may be used by breeding birds shall take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check for active birds' nests immediately before works commence and provided written confirmation that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site. Any such written confirmation should be submitted to the County Planning Authority for approval in writing;

29) Ecological enhancement measures including bird and bat boxes shall be implemented in accordance with Section 5 of the Updated Ecological Assessment (2/Ph1Ecoass.doc, Wilder Ecology, October 2020). On implementation of these ecological enhancement measures, a Statement of Conformity shall be submitted to the County Planning Authority confirming successful implementation; and

Planning permission

30) A copy of this decision notice, together with all approved plans and documents required under the conditions of this permission shall be maintained at the site office at all times throughout the period of the development and shall be made known to any person(s) given responsibility for management or control of activities/operations on the site.

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points for this report

Case Officer: Joanne O'Brien

Tel: 01905 728561

Email: jobrien@worcestershire.gov.uk

Steven Aldridge, Team Leader – Development Management

Tel: 01905 843510

Email: saldridge@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Head of Planning and Transport Planning) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

The application, plans and consultation replies in file reference: 20/000038/CM, which can be viewed online at: <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/eplanning> by entering the full application reference. When searching by application reference, the full application reference number, including the suffix need to be entered into the search field. Copies of letters of representation are available on request from the Case Officer.