I strongly OBJECT to the inclusion of the site at Weylands Treatment Works (referenced EL/07 in the draft plan). I do not officially represent any body interested in this matter. However, I have been “networking” on this topic for some years and I know that I speak for a great many local residents who share my views and concerns. I live in Rydens Road, which would bear the brunt of HGV traffic, if ever the Weylands site were to be the subject of any major waste development. This submission is based solely on these traffic concerns. I make no submission on other issues such as air quality.

HISTORY OF THE SITE –

Through the default of local councils (around 1997) the former treatment works was given a Certificate of Lawful Use for various waste activities. From that time onwards, local residents have been plagued by HGV traffic – especially on Rydens Road and Molesey Road. There has particularly been a marked increase in skip lorries, and the impact on local homes and families has been severe. There was a fatal accident when a cyclist was hit by a skip lorry. There has been no enforcement of speed limits, so HGV traffic to and from the site has caused noise disturbance, vibration and danger. These HGV movements occur at all hours from about 05.30 onwards.

HISTORY OF APPLICATIONS –

There have been two major applications for developing the site, involving an anaerobic digester and a huge waste stack. In the first application, Clean Power Ltd took the matter to the Planning Committee of SCC. They were soundly defeated, with most councillors voting for refusal and just two abstentions. The Committee plainly felt that Weylands was entirely the wrong location for such development. I spoke at that meeting, as did two other residents and a person from Screwfix Ltd representing all the businesses which would be affected at the Lyon Road industrial estate. A further application was made a year or two later but the Applicant simply dropped the application at the last minute. They clearly realised that they were in for another heavy defeat.

Following on those failed applications, Elmbridge BC has called for the complete removal of the Weylands site from the future waste options being considered by Surrey CC. It is difficult to imagine a site which is less suited to large-scale industrialisation or waste development. Part of the site is, of course green belt land.

RESIDENTS’ CONCERNS –

Any aggravation of the HGV problem would be intolerable to thousands of people living in this predominantly residential area. Molesey Road provides access to the site with two possible entrances, but both of those possible access points are inappropriate. In any event, the low railway bridge at Hersham Station is a barrier to the biggest HGVs. With a lorry ban in place along Walton
Park, the result is that most HGV drivers opt to approach (or leave) the site via Rydens Road. This road is entirely residential, as are the dozens of roads leading off it. Rydens Road is not a trunk road, or an A road, or even a B road. It is totally unclassified and was never intended to bear substantial volumes of industrial traffic. As has already occurred, HGVs disturb residents’ sleep, they ignore speed limits, they are exceedingly dangerous in such a built-up residential area and they cause vibration damage to houses. For instance, a neighbour of mine had some tiles shaken off his bathroom wall as an HGV thundered past. There is structural cracking to a number of properties.

LOCAL ROAD NETWORK –

The approach roads for HGVs do not provide any suitable route to the site. The A244 runs 1.7 kilometres from the site but the character of that 1.7 km is critical to any proper evaluation of the site. That 1.7km is crowded with residential streets and also contains a number of schools and nurseries. The area is distinguishable from other sites (such as Charlton Waste Transfer Station) where there are far fewer homes, families and schools to be affected. Rydens Road must not be allowed to become a motorway for speeding HGVs.

At one end of Rydens Road is the Halfway junction. This is heavily used by hundreds of children walking/cycling to and from local schools, especially the nearby Three Rivers Academy and Bell Farm Primary. Their safety must not be threatened by an increase in size and volume of HGV traffic. On Molesey Road, the danger is also to children attending Cardinal Newman and Burhill Schools.

The pedestrian guard rails at the Halfway bear several signs of heavy impacts from traffic – see photograph. The plain fact is that the junction is too tight for large loads to negotiate safely, as can be seen at any time by personal observation.

ENFORCEMENT –

There is simply no appetite for enforcement of operating conditions and speed limits. Only round-the-clock policing would achieve a tolerable outcome. That is simply not going to happen. In particular, Rydens Road residents reject any installation of speed humps, which would provide a take-off for speeding HGVs…..and a lot more noise and vibration when they land on the road surface!

ACCESS and EGRESS –

There are two possible entrances to the Weylands site. Both have been shown to be hopelessly inadequate and dangerous. The former entrance was adjacent to the ticket office at Hersham Station. That was always unsuitable for HGVs, as it caused frequent chaos with other traffic negotiating the one-way traffic signals, plus vehicles emerging from queues in Walton Park. Latterly, that entrance has been closed off and we have seen the alternative entrance being used, at Lyon Road. That entrance is no better, as it has a Tesco store right on the corner, with a service station immediately opposite. There are also other businesses very close by, including Screwfix. It takes only one badly parked car or one delivery lorry to arrive and the whole junction becomes chaotic and dangerous for HGVs to negotiate.

CONCLUSION –
The area has already suffered enough with a high volume of HGV traffic. Ever since the Certificate of Lawful Use was granted, the quality of life in and around Rydens Road has suffered. Two wrongs don’t make a right, so I respectfully ask the Inspector to reject the future inclusion of Weylands in Surrey’s waste plans.

Mick Flannigan, 2019.