

UPDATE

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NRW CONSOLIDATION AND VARIATION OF PERMITS

AT CHIRK PARTICLEBOARD FACTORY

Since receiving Kronospan's application for a variation to their permit and commencing our detailed determination, we have requested a significant amount of further information from Kronospan.

Several issues remain unresolved in relation to Kronospan's application for a new Oriented Strand Board (OSB) production line, which has resulted in further delay to our determination of the variation.

The most significant issue relates to the noise assessment, which has been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Although Kronospan predicted the noise levels associated with the proposed OSB development, we consider that the background data used for comparison is not representative, so we cannot determine the magnitude of the impact.

We requested further information from Kronospan on the 5 February 2020. This included a request for an updated noise survey at nine sensitive locations around the facility, to capture the background sound levels that are representative of the operation of the facility without the proposed OSB development.

The survey could not be carried out due to adverse weather conditions during February and early March 2020. The Covid-19 lockdown then started on 23 March 2020. As such, the noise survey could not be conducted because the site was (and still is) not operating at full capacity.

Background sound levels in the area are also artificially low due to reduced traffic movements and other activity during this unprecedented time. Any survey conducted now would still be considered unrepresentative of normal site operations.

We are unable to complete our assessment of Kronospan's OSB application without this information, so we have decided to progress with the consolidation of the Wrexham County Borough Council and NRW permits separately to the OSB determination.

The benefits of this revised approach are two-fold. First, it means that NRW will take over regulation of the entire site, conducting all regulatory functions in relation to the permit in a shorter time. Second, it means that we can complete our statutory review of current site activities against the published Best Available Techniques for Production of Wood-based Panels, ensuring the permit incorporates the latest

European best practice and associated emission limits for the Medium Density Fibreboard (MDF) and Particleboard production processes.

In the meantime, we are continuing to engage with Kronospan on the unresolved issues and remain committed to consulting with the public on our draft decision for the consolidated permit. We anticipate that our draft decision on the consolidation will be available by end of 2020.

At present, it is not possible to give a definitive date for a draft decision on the OSB application, because although the technical assessment is continuing, it is being impacted by the Covid-19 situation. However, we will consult with the public on our draft decision on the OSB application once we have reached this stage.