

RDEVELOPMENT CONTROL AND REGULATORY BOARD**7th August 2025****REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE****COUNTY MATTER****ADDENDUM**

APP.NO. & DATE: 2023/CM/0053/LCC (2024/00041/03) - 21 December 2023

PROPOSAL: Proposed Anaerobic Digestion Plant, Associated Infrastructure, Lagoons and Feedstock Clamps

LOCATION: Marigold Farm, Welham Road, Great Bowden, LE16 7FN

APPLICANT: Great Bowden Green Energy Ltd

1. Following publication of the Officer's report, 7 additional representations have been received, including three from the public and representations from: the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust; Harborough, Oadby and Wigston Green Party; Mr D. Page CC; and Mr P. King CC. Issues raised include:
 - a) Highways and Traffic: concern the site is on a no through single lane that is used for farming, and by pedestrians accessing other bridleways/footpaths. Concern the local road system is not designed to accommodate the number of HGVs proposed and it would increase the risk of serious accidents.
 - b) Odour, noise and traffic pollution: particularly in warmer weather; environmental impact; visual impact; impact on health and wellbeing from the stress the site would cause.
 - c) Outlined odour, noise, and measurable public health impacts at other anaerobic digestion facilities in the UK, causing community disruption, legal disputes, and regulatory intervention.
 - d) Outlined the pending application ref: 25/00517/OUT.
 - e) Concern local business would be impacted due to reduced visitor numbers and users of Welham Lane.
 - f) Reference to more suitable locations.
 - g) Proximity to residential homes: outlined regulation in other countries for separation distances between anaerobic digestion facilities and residential homes, and outlined that, 'UK Guidance is 400 metres'.

- h) Outlined, “This application is contrary to current government strategy-follow their guidance”.

2. Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust (L&RWT)- Objection:

Concern regarding the impacts on the ‘Rewilding Market Harborough’ project. Particular concern regarding the increase in HGV traffic, stating, “*Without thorough assessment and appropriate mitigation, the anticipated rise in HGV movements may pose a significant safety risk to members of the public accessing neighbouring land for recreation, education, and nature engagement*”. Concern the likely long-term impacts of the proposed development on the objectives of the Rewilding Market Harborough project do not appear to have been adequately assessed given the application was launched prior to the public launch of the rewilding initiative. Of particular concern are the potential effects of emissions from the proposed plant on newly developing and existing habitats - both immediately adjacent to the site and nearby - including those within the James Adler Nature Reserve and the Borrowpit Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). As such, L&RWT strongly recommends that a more detailed and comprehensive evaluation of the proposed scheme be undertaken at this stage to specifically address the potential impacts of increased traffic on visitor access and safety, as well as the potential environmental implications for significant areas of adjacent habitats being actively restored and managed under the new rewilding project.

3. Harborough, Oadby and Wigston Green Party- Objection:

Concern regarding close proximity to residential homes, the national cycle route and the new country park. Concern relating to traffic generation and odour, particularly opposite the active Council depot. Concern regarding its potential impact on the Market Harborough rewilding area, especially regarding traffic. Reference to the Environment Agency’s ‘A Review of Environmental Incidents at Anaerobic Digestion (AD) Plants and Associated Sites between 2010 and 2018 September 2019’ document and a 2023 research paper outlining the possible health effects of AD sites. Outlined studies have shown that AD sites can increase harmful gases such as methane and other methods for disposing/reducing organic waste at source should be prioritised.

4. Mr D. Page CC- Objection:

Concern regarding access, traffic and safety, particularly regarding Welham Lane and vehicle movements generated. Concern junction modelling, “*omits upgrades to the Macdonald’s roundabout to the north, the southern A6 roundabout, or any consideration of the Kibworths’ bottleneck*”. Concern if poultry manure is not sourced from the farm to the north of the site, more vehicles would be required from a wider catchment and could undermine the applicant’s transport modelling.

Concern the cumulative impacts of HGVs, odour, noise, and dust are incompatible with the countryside location and the proposal would undermine public use of the National Cycle Network affecting access for leisure users and the rewilding programme. References policy conflict with Policy EMP2 of the Great Bowden Neighbourhood Plan, Policy CS11 of Harborough's Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework given concerns that a safe and accessible access is not achievable. Concern whether sufficient feedstock exists without vastly increasing transport distances and carbon impact given the two existing AD plants in the area (Rothwell and A508 south of Market Harborough). Concern the proposal is, *"not a DEFRA-favoured model, and the plant appears to rely not on genuine waste but on agricultural land being diverted from food to energy, contrary to government guidance"*. Concern that the LLFA has accepted the proposal conditionally, with concerns remaining about flood resilience, ditch ownership, and long-term maintenance. Outlined the proposal represents the industrialisation of the rural landscape.

5. **Mr P. King CC – Objection:**

Concern regarding the lack of contracts in place between the operator and the poultry farm to the north of the site. Concern the condition limiting HGV movements to 52 per day is allowed at all times rather than being restrained to certain months of the year. Concern that traffic, even with the proposed improvements, would increase the risk of accidents at the A6 junction. Concern Harborough District Council's waste contractor's working operations could be impacted by the intensification of the junction. Concern the volume of additional vehicle movements, noise, and dust would have a negative impact on this countryside location. Concern the proposal could impact the District Council's rewilding plan. Concern no improvements to the A6 are proposed given the increase in large slow-moving vehicles. Concern anaerobic digestion plants are not being supported by DEFRA as, *"they believe Agricultural Land should be used primarily for Food Production rather than Energy"*. Concern the waste being used in the proposal is not that high. Questioned the financial viability of the site given its proximity to other anaerobic digestion facilities (Rothwell and A508 south of Market Harborough) and the subsequent availability of feedstock. Concern if feedstock is not locally available, then large and slow vehicle movements could be travelling over a much wider radius than suggested.

6. The majority of the above concerns have been assessed within the main report throughout the assessment section, however comments raising new concerns are considered below:
7. Regarding the impact of noise during warm weather, it is noted that condition 28 of Appendix A outlines daytime and nighttime noise levels identified in the Sound Assessment Report at the nearest residential properties is to be maintained

throughout the life of the development, year-round. These conditions have been reviewed by the District Council's Environmental Health Officer and are deemed to be acceptable.

8. Regarding the Environment Agency's (EA) 'A Review of Environmental Incidents at Anaerobic Digestion (AD) Plants and Associated Sites between 2010 and 2018 September 2019' document, this paper dates from 6 years ago and the EA will be regulating the site as part of the permitting process. Given that the EA produced the referenced report and would also be responsible for issuing and controlling the site under the permit, it is reasonable to work on the basis they are fully aware of the potential for environment incidents and any mitigation necessary. To emphasise, paragraph 201 of the NPPF outlines that the focus of planning 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.
9. Regarding the 2023 research paper outlined by the Green Party, this relates to anaerobic digestion facilities which accept food waste, whereas the proposed development does not. Condition 13 of Appendix A will restrict the feedstock types to only the proposed poultry manure, maize and straw. Therefore, the report is not considered to alter the assessment of the proposal.
10. Regarding concerns that studies have shown anaerobic digestion facilities can increase harmful gases such as methane, the purpose of the proposal is to generate biomethane for injection to the grid. Any loss of methane as part of the process is not in the applicant's interests. Nevertheless, gas and emissions measures would be controlled by the EA as part of the permitting regime.
11. Reference has been made to the Rothwell anaerobic digestion facility. Whilst the name of other facility is not specifically mentioned, it is assumed reference is being made to the Wormslade Farm facility in Kelmarsh. Available evidence indicates that, for the most part, these facilities utilise different feedstocks to the proposed development. As such, the risk of cumulative pressure on specific feedstock types is not considered to be significant. Furthermore, the Feedstock Management Plan to be secured via condition will provide contingency measures in the event of changes in the availability of the feedstock, which the Waste Planning Authority can monitor and enforce.
12. Regarding concerns that condition 11 of Appendix A limiting heavy vehicle movements to 52 per day is allowed at all times rather than being restrained to certain months of the year. This condition is over and above the controls requested by the Local Highway's Authority and is aimed at limiting vehicle movements during the peak periods. Further restricting heavy vehicle movements would not

be considered in line with paragraph 57 of the NPPF which states, “*Planning conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects*”.

13. Whilst reference to guidance is noted within these representations, it is unclear what guidance is specifically being referred to. However, it is reiterated that each application must be assessed on its own merits, based on the specific site contexts, scale, design, environmental impacts, and policy compliance of the proposal in question.
14. In consideration of the above, the recommendation as set out the in main report remains.

Officer to Contact

Charlie Cookson (Tel. 0116 305 1085).

Email: planningcontrol@leics.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank