

Our Ref: 23/04097/CTY
Your Ref: CCC/23/110/FUL

5 December 2023



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Dear Sir/Madam

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Consultation Response on Application CCC/23/110/FUL

Proposal: Farm based anaerobic digestion renewable energy facility, construction of vehicular access/road to A1307, associated infrastructure and landscaping.

Site address: Streetly Hall Farm Webbs Road West Wickham Cambridgeshire

Please find enclosed the Local Planning Authority's response on the above matter.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'SJ Kelly'.

SJ Kelly
Joint Director For Planning & Economic Development For
Cambridge & South Cambridgeshire

Contact: Nick Yager
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Site address: Streetly Hall Farm Webbs Road West Wickham Cambridgeshire

Thank you for your consultation request received on 27th October 2023 on the following matter:

Farm based anaerobic digestion renewable energy facility, construction of vehicular access/road to A1307, associated infrastructure and landscaping. (CCC/23/110/FUL)

at

Streetly Hall Farm Webbs Road West Wickham Cambridgeshire

South Cambridgeshire District Council objects to the proposal for a Farm-base anaerobic digestion renewable energy facility, construction of vehicular access/road to A1307, associated infrastructure and landscaping.

Consultations comments have received from South Cambridgeshire District Council's Environmental Health's, Landscape and Conservation Officers Officer's, please see below.

Principle of the Development

The proposal should be assessed in accordance with Policy CC/2 (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation) of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 and para 158 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.

Policy CC/2 states the following;

1.Planning permission for proposals to generate energy from renewable and low carbon sources, with the exception of proposals for wind turbines, will be permitted provided that:

- a. The development, and any associated infrastructure, either individually or cumulatively with other developments, does not have unacceptable adverse impacts on heritage assets (including their settings), natural assets, high quality agricultural land, the landscape, or the amenity of nearby residents (visual impact, noise, shadow flicker, odour, fumes, traffic);
- b. The development can be connected efficiently to existing national energy infrastructure, or by direct connection to an associated development or community project, or the energy generated would be used for on-site needs only;
- c. Provision is made for decommissioning once the operation has ceased, including the removal of the facilities and the restoration of the site; and
- d. Developers have engaged effectively with the local community and local authority.

This policy sets out the criteria that must be considered when assessing proposals for developments to generate renewable or low carbon energy from freestanding installations, such as wind or solar farms.

Renewable and low carbon energy generation sources can either fully or partially displace the use of fossil fuels. These sources include technologies such as photovoltaic panels, wind turbines, solar thermal panels, air or ground source heat pumps, anaerobic digestion, combined heat and power plants, and biomass boilers where heat is generated. These technologies need to be located on-site or close to the energy users.

Using renewable and low carbon energy technologies to generate electricity and/or heat will help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and should also progressively improve the security, availability and affordability of energy by increasing the diversity of sources we can access.

Para 158 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 states the following;

When determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon development, local planning authorities should:

- a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions;
- b) approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas, and
- c) in the case of applications for the repowering and life-extension of existing renewable sites, give significant weight to the benefits of utilising an established site, and approve the proposal if its impacts are or can be made acceptable.

Landscape Officer Comments

Object for the following reasons: NH/2 Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character

Background information /additional comments:

There is concern regarding the developments impact on the local Landscape Character. At a National Level the site falls into the South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands. This NCA is widely rural with a very high percentage retained as arable farmland and noted for being remote and tranquil. The site falls into this characteristic. Set within a rolling river valley surrounded by arable fields. At a District level, the site falls into the Linton Chalk Hills character area which is characterised again by irregularly shaped arable fields and an openness which contributes to long, open views across the rural valleys. The Character is also defined by the presence of the Roman Road which is distinctively linear.

The LVA has acknowledged much of this information and characterisation but there is a concern that in some instances the landscape has been under-valued. Whilst the intention to heavily plant the area around the proposed structures and lagoons is justified and positive in nature, it cannot screen the proposals from many of the entitled views and will be a detractive element in the open

landscape which is not in keeping with the character of the area. While the topography of the area, does reasonably well at screening the development from the south east, the same topography opens the site up to views from hillsides and adjacent areas as seen in views 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 14 in the LVA.

In addition to the impact on views and characters, the applicant has not considered or supplied information on how the access road will cross the Roman Road/Harcamlow Way.

We have concerns about the impact additional traffic may have on this section of the Roman Road and the agricultural land in the vicinity and question why traffic is not accessed via the pre-existing Dean's Road and Webb's Road, avoiding any need to bring any additional development into this countryside area.

LVA

The LVA has created the following clarifications needed and concerns:

View point 6 does not seem to correlate correctly to the photograph associated with it.

Viewpoint 7 is incorrectly mapped (pg 33)

14.15 - it's not clear how the change from an open agricultural field described in 14.11, to a developed site that is utilitarian rather than attractive can have a beneficial effect. The inclusion of additional planting will have a limited overall effect and will be positive however, the overall impact of the development even with mitigation planting will remain adverse.

14.19 - We considered that the impact on the scattered woodland blocks ultimately would remain Neutral Negligible

14.28 - will there be any additional impact caused by delivery of waste/fuel etc. The transport assessment identifies a large number of vehicular movements created by the development both of staff as well as delivery of fuels/materials by tractors and/or hgvs. This additional traffic within this view area will negatively impact the rural tranquillity of the area.

14.34 - no ultimate effect has been considered for the PROW network and particularly the Harcamlow long distance route. Whilst we agree that the Harcamlow Way is mostly screened by topography and existing (and proposed) landscape, the access drive to the facility will cross it. Additionally, the proposed site will be visible or partly visible from various other locations along the Harcamlow Way and other PROW routes around the site and outside of the red line boundary. As a result, we consider that the effect will be minor adverse on the PROW network.

Landscape design

The proposed Landscape drawing suggests that much of the surrounding land will be changed from arable field use to either meadow or a treebelt. Outside the redline boundary but within the blue line boundary of the site, additional landscape is proposed in the form of a woodland block to screen views from the Harcamlow Way crossing of Dean Road as well as extensive hedgerow planting along the access road. The existing hedges along Harcamlow Way and Webbs Road will be infilled with native species. All these proposals are positive, but will not fully screen the facility from all the various receptors within the study area. Ultimately the facility will be visible and will be a negative component of the rural landscape despite the improved green infrastructure and landscape. No details for the planting mixes have been provided other than to identify that areas will be 'mixed native' which is acceptable at this level. We would expect a condition to be placed on the development if it were to be approved which requires the submission of further landscape details.

Conservation Officer

The Historic Environment assessment identifies three designated heritage assets potentially impacted by the proposed development.

It is agreed that the site does not contribute to the significance of St Mary's Church (grade II* listed) or West Wratting Park House (grade II*), and that the proposed development would have a negligible impact on their respective settings due to the distances and screening provided by intervening trees and landscape features.

Closer to the site is Streetly Hall Farmhouse, which is a grade II listed farmhouse dating to the mid-late 18th century. The farm complex includes barns and outbuildings that are curtilage listed and of historic interest to the north and east of the farmhouse. There are also a series of more modern farm buildings of low significance. The arrangement of buildings and open character of the landscape mean the farm is experienced within its landscape towards the development site from both public and private viewpoints. This rural and agricultural setting, including the site of the proposed development, is considered a key aspect of the listed building's significance.

The LVIA and HE assessment confirm that there would be intervisibility between the listed farmhouse, its curtilage, and the proposed development. However, the HE assessment underplays the significance the site to the listed building as the land became part of the farm after its initial construction. While it is agreed that the general nature of the proposals relate to the character and continuous development of the farming complex, their extent and scale exceeds any existing modern structure on site. At 16.1m and 12m, the digester and largest barn would be substantial structures in the immediate context of the historic farmhouse and outbuildings, introducing dominant and competing forms in the landscape. Together with the proposed access track, the structures would be visible from the listed farmhouse and its context, changing the way the asset is appreciated within its immediate and wider setting.

NPPF practice guidance states that '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 that 'The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights of way or an ability to otherwise access or experience that setting.' (Para 013).

In light of the above, it is considered the development would have a harmful impact on the setting and significance of the listed farmhouse. The harm is considered less than substantial and should therefore be balanced by the decision maker against the public benefits of the proposal as required by NPPF para. 202, giving great weight to the conservation of the heritage asset.

The proposed access track would cross the route of the Via Devana Roman road, which is non-designated in this location but considered of local historic landscape significance. The track is likely to result in harm to the significance of the road, and therefore mitigation, as recommended by County Council archaeological advisors, is required.

Environmental Health Officer

I wish to confirm that I have received a copy of the above application and have considered the implications of the proposals.

Officers from the Environmental Health department have considered the various reports submitted as part of this proposal and their comments are as follows:

Executive Summary

Noise

The document considered for noise concerns was "Proposed Anaerobic Digestion Facility - Streetly Hall Farm Ref: 22.095.1.R2" by Professional Consult dated 4th August 2023.

The report considered the nearby sensitive noise receptors at Streetly Farm Cottages, and provides an impact assessment of Construction Phase and Operational Phase noise sources. It uses BS5228 and BS4142 to consider the potential impacts of each phase.

I agree broadly with the conclusions in the report and given the information provided, do not expect significant adverse impact from the development as proposed. However, to protect the amenity of the receptors, I would recommend that any changes to the proposal that could alter the noise environment of the final use should be submitted and approved by the local authority before works take place.

I note that the CEMP contains information regarding the operating hours for the construction phase of the development, this department will recommend a condition restricting noisy works to between the hours of 0800-1800 Monday to Friday, 0800-1300 Saturday and not at any time on Sundays or Bank or Public holidays.

Odour

Comments provided by Peter Gibson

The Odour Assessment, undertaken by Redmore Environmental and submitted by the applicant in support of their application, models odour emissions from the proposal and the likely impact it may have on nearby sensitive receptors, taking into account meteorological data. The assessment suggests that odour complaints are unlikely to arise from the granting of this development.

I further advise you that should planning consent be granted, the development will be subject to an Environmental Permit which will regulate the site in relation to odour (and noise) impacts. The Environment Agency (EA) are the regulatory body for the Environmental Permit who I understand has been working with the applicant.

Air Quality

Comments provided by Matthew Axton

The Air Quality Assessment, undertaken by Redmore Environmental, reference 5949-1r2, 21 August 2023 and submitted by the applicant in support of their application, models pollutant emissions from the proposal and the likely impact it may have on nearby sensitive human and ecological receptors, taking into account meteorological data. The assessment concludes that air quality impacts can be classified as not significant for both human and ecological receptors. These conclusions are acceptable.

The Environmental Permit required for site operation will ensure that pollutant concentrations will remain acceptable for the operational period of the development.

We do not require any further information or any planning conditions in relation to air quality at this time.

Conditions

I would advise that the following conditions / informatives should be attached to any planning consent granted;

1. No construction site machinery or plant shall be operated, no noisy works shall be carried out and no construction related deliveries taken at or dispatched from the site except between the hours of 0800-1800 Monday to Friday, 0800-1300 Saturday and not at any time on Sundays or Bank or Public holidays.

(Reason: To protect the amenity of the locality, especially for people living and/or working nearby, in accordance with local planning policy)

2. In the event of the foundations for the proposed development requiring piling, prior to the development taking place the applicant shall provide the local authority with a report / method statement for approval detailing the type of piling and mitigation measures to be taken to protect local residents noise and or vibration. Potential noise and vibration levels at the nearest noise sensitive locations shall be predicted in accordance with the provisions of BS 5528, 2009 - Code of Practice for Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites Parts 1 - Noise and 2 -Vibration (or as superseded). Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Informative General

The applicant should take all relevant precautions to minimise the potential for disturbance to neighbouring residents in terms of noise and dust during the construction phases of development. This should include the use of water suppression for any stone or brick cutting and advising neighbours in advance of any particularly noisy works.

The granting of this planning permission does not indemnify against statutory nuisance action being taken should substantiated noise or dust complaints be received. For further information please contact the Environment Planning Team.

Please return a copy of the decision notice regarding this application, quoting the Department's reference, when it has been determined.

If you have any queries or wish to discuss the above please contact me.

We look forward to receiving notification of the decision notice.

Yours faithfully

Nick Yager
Principal Planning Officer

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