

29th November 2023

Dear Mr Rutter,

Anaerobic Digester Plant Proposal

Location: Land to the north of Spring Grove Farm, Withersfield, Suffolk, CB9 7SW

Application number SCC/0045/23SE

I am writing on behalf of the Friends of East Town Park. This is a body set up to support the main park in Haverhill. Its' aims are to promote, enhance and improve the recreational, environmental and educational facilities offered. It is largely comprised of people who also offer their services as volunteers, helping the Rangers to maintain and improve the structure and content of the park.

Having such an ethic means that we are very concerned by the current proposal to build and operate an anaerobic digestion facility at the Western end of Haverhill. Although the park is situated at the other end of the town, the Stour brook does run through the main section of the park. As this is an important feature, adding greatly to the wildlife and flora seen and enjoyed by the residents of the town, we are naturally worried by any potential threat to the quality of the water flowing through the park.

We are fortunate in that this section of the Stour Brook meanders considerably, is highly regarded by the wildlife trust, and the envy of other similar wildlife areas with relatively straight streams. This provides us with oxygenating turbulent flows and calmer areas of respite, and it is these that are of concern as elevated nitrate and phosphate levels can also affect the ecological quality of the waters through the eutrophication process whereby excess nutrients cause Algal/plant proliferation damaging the water quality and ecology of the stream.

Any spillage of digestate or rain-washed droppings from delivery vehicles will ultimately pass into the stream which is also used by children paddling and by dogs.

The foregoing would also apply at the Haverhill West Town Park in close proximity to the proposed application site.

Any incident involving toxic chemicals flowing or leeching into the watercourse could affect the park in several ways. Apart from the immediate impact upon the fish, birds and other wildlife that live in the brook, there could also be an impact on the plant life. Any increase in the water weed growth, driven by chemicals in the water, could affect the flow of the brook. This, in turn, would divert the ranger and volunteer resources into trying to mitigate these negative impacts, which in turn would prevent other important maintenance work from being carried out.

Therefore, we ask that the Council refuse the current application.

Mark Pollington,

Vice Chair, on behalf of the Friends of East Town Park.