

From: Godfrey Dutton [REDACTED]
Sent: 05 December 2023 16:37
To: SCC Planning Mailbox
Subject: Spring Grove Farm Planning Application for construction of Anaerobic Digester Plant [Ref:SCC/0045/23SE] COMMENT BY WAY OF OBJECTION

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As a resident of Streetly End, West Wickham I comment on the application for an Anaerobic Digestion Facility at Spring Grove Farm (SCC/0045/23SE)

I object to the application to construct and operate an anaerobic digestion facility on the land north of Spring Grove Farm and the associated lagoon site on land north east of Craig's Wood. The lagoon site is in close proximity to West Wickham and surrounding villages and would require numerous vehicles passing through our narrow and winding road.

Current Policy

Suffolk Minerals & Waste Plan (adopted in 2020) Policies WP3 and WP7 do not support this application as the site is neither used for existing waste management, industry or distribution; it is not brownfield land; it is not within or adjacent to agricultural buildings, or integrated with a water treatment plant.

Location:

The site is within 200 metres and, on one side is too close to a large number of residential properties, a superstore and petrol station (Sainsbury's), an industrial park incorporating B&Q and Halfords, the Flying Shuttle pub, and the Haverhill Research Park (Landmark Epicentre offices and cafe) located directly across the road from the site area. On the other side of the site is green belt with historic landscape views, a stream and public footpath. The proposal represents an industrial waste disposal and biogas manufacturing plant to be constructed close to residential amenities and tranquil rural setting, thus destroying the essential character of the green space and farmland presently enjoyed and presenting danger to residents and workers.

Impact on business

Haverhill Vision 2031(adopted by St Edmundsbury Borough Council in 2014) identifies 12 hectares of land at Hanchet End as a strategic employment site in Policy HV10. This policy zones this land for technology, research and light industrial employment, aiming to bring high quality jobs to Haverhill. Haverhill Research Park and the Landmark Epicentre innovation centre is only 200m from the plant site boundary. Other businesses will also be prejudicially affected including the Flying Shuttle public house and Sainsbury's Supermarket and Fuel Station. The vast visual appearance of this site, its noise and odour will be hugely detrimental to attracting customers to Sainsbury's and employers in the area. No prestigious employer is going to want to site their office overlooking such an unattractive set of structures with the well documented risk of unpleasant odours and dangers associated with the industrial production of corrosive biogas.

Odour:

Whilst the proposal hopes to comply with Government benchmarks, the odour will reach and be smelt by residents opposite and employees in the Haverhill Research Park, especially with prevailing wind from the green space on one side. This will cause nuisance to all (eg making it impossible to open windows, sit in the pub garden, hang out washing etc) and in some cases become a health hazard particularly to the vulnerable and those with breathing problems. This will prejudicially impact the quality of life of local residents and workers in the area and will undoubtedly inhibit people visiting or working in the area and patronise shops etc.

Noise:

Whilst the noise output from the plant is hoped to be below the Government benchmark, the immediate proximity of local residents and the employees of the Haverhill Research Park means constant noise from the

plant, particularly in a prevailing wind. It will prejudice the well being of the residents and their enjoyment of the relative tranquillity of the area. Noise created by vehicles entering and exiting the plant will similarly impact residents and thus prejudice their quality of life.

Access and Egress:

It is proposed that access and egress 6 days a week to the site will be close to the roundabout by Haverhill Research Park. This is an area that is busy at the best of times and the additional plant traffic will cause traffic jams and attendant pollution.

The additional traffic will cause further problems travelling to and from Cambridge on the A1397 particularly if planning permission is granted for the construction of a further anaerobic digester at Streetly Hall Farm, West Wickham [CCC/23/110/FUL] with their proposal for a new access road giving both access and egress onto the A1307 both toward Cambridge and Haverhill just past the second turn off to Horseheath. Both access/egress point are in direct opposition to South Cambs District Council's original plan to make the A1307 safer as evidenced by the work currently being undertaken to block any right turn (north and south) at the Dean Road Crossing and the construction of a roundabout at the Linton/Bartlow junction further towards Cambridge.

The proposed plant traffic will significantly increase traffic on the A1307 and is not commensurate with the South Cambs DC'S road safety provisions and policy for the A1307. It will cause traffic delays, congestion and pollution and will significantly increase the risk of accidents on a road already designated a High Casualty Route.

Output from plant:

It is proposed that methane gas emitted by the plant be captured in storage tanks and then either piped or transported by road tanker. Connection by pipe requires governmental permission both as to general access to the main pipe and as to the times and amount of biogas that can be piped into the system by the plant at any one time. The biogas produced may require further chemical processes beyond that comprised in the proposal before it is of a chemical compound acceptable to be piped into the main gas pipe. Currently there is no guarantee any of these permissions will be given. The implication is that all methane gas or some gas from time to time (as may be imposed by the main gas pipeline) may have to be transported off site by road tanker (in liquid or gas form) using the access road, thus adding to the number and regularity of vehicles and further increasing the A1307 risks mentioned above.

It is hoped that permission will be given to pipe the polluting and corrosive digestate a considerable distant underground to lagoons at Craig's Wood. This means the removal of the amenity for residents in the area to walk because of the malodorous odour and the dangers of digestate pollution.

If the digestate cannot be so piped it will have to be removed using highly adapted vehicles again increasing the traffic and the risks previously mentioned.

Loss of amenity

The presence of a large scale biogas processing facility represents a significant loss of residential amenity and indeed danger to residents of Haverhill and to those visiting or working in the town - especially those in the Hanchet End area. The visual, noise, traffic, odour and pollution impacts are all detrimental to those close to this facility. The substantial change in the character of the area from technology and research based high value employment, modern homes and leisure facilities, to a large scale facility for processing farm waste and manufacture of combustible biogas on a prominent approach into Haverhill is detrimental to the amenity of the town in general.

The storage of large amounts of flammable gas carries inherent risks incompatible with being close to residential and commercial development, including a petroleum station. Consideration should be given to the Explosion of the anaerobic digester at Cressington, Oxfordshire in October 2023 constructed by Acorn (the same proposed construction company) the cause of which so far as I know has not yet been finally determined. The siting of polluting digestate lagoons close to Craig's Wood destroys the historic landscape and greatly prejudices the walking amenity of near residents.

I object strongly to this application for all the above reasons.

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5 December 2023

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