


From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 23, 2023 10:23 AM
To: Andrew Rutter <Andrew.Rutter@suffolk.gov.uk>
Subject: Reference: SCC/0045/23SE Acorn Energy Biodigester, Withersfield

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Acorn Energy Biodigester

Application Number: SCC/0045/23SE

Construction and operation of an anaerobic digestion facility, associated infrastructure and new access road, connecting pipeline and covered digestate lagoons

Applicant: Acorn Bioenergy Limited/Thurlow Estate

Dear Andrew,

I strongly object to the application by Acorn Energy/Thurlow Estate to construct and operate a biodigester in Withersfield Parish. There are so many objections to this project, but my main concerns are the following:

- **Traffic**

Delivering inputs to the site (agricultural waste in the form of poultry manure and agricultural crops grown specifically for such purpose) will generate a significant increase in HGV traffic the surrounding roads, potentially minor roads through the surrounding villages (e.g. Great Wratting) which are unsuitable for HGV's and designated as such. Tankers of CO₂ and methane will leave the site straight onto the A1307 which is already unfit for purpose and generate congestion at the nearby roundabout and along its route towards Cambridge. There will also be a significant increase in farm vehicle movements across the farm tracks of the Thurlow estate and the local single-track roads with which they intersect.

At peak times in June/July they have advised that there will be an additional 148 lorry/tractor movements a day, using the roads and farm access routes to the site.

- **Environmental Impact**

Whilst some evidence has been submitted, it is insufficient to satisfy me that the plant will not have a detrimental impact on the local environment e.g.

- Its proximity to the Stour brook and on the edge of West Town Park is a threat to both wild life habitats and public open space. Something which the council should be keen to protect.
- Visual impact at the gateway to Haverhill and in sight of the Epicentre and new/recent housing developments.
- This area is designated Flood Zone 3 which means there is a high probability of flooding, particularly with climate change.
- Risk of leakage and spills from the lagoons, particularly at points of delivery

- Evidence from similar facilities does not support the claim that there will be no smell from the biodigester.
- Particulates released into the atmosphere during the production process and the HGV & farm vehicle movements, close to residential areas and a nursery school.
- **Employment Benefits**
Given that the site will only employ 5 people, this is will not be a significant employer, although there will be more employment during construction. This will need to be offset against the risk of losing employment at the Epicentre. Proximity of a huge waste disposal facility close to a Scientific Research Park will limit the potential of further expansion and risk losing jobs that are already there.
- **Land use**
The site is classified as grade 2 agricultural land and hence has the potential to produce food crops. Under current plans it is not designated for either housing or industrial use. A waste disposal & manufacturing facility is a significant 'change of use' in planning terms.
I believe it is inappropriate to use land that is suitable for growing food crops to grow crops that are going to be fed into a biodigester. We should be producing food not gas!
- **Green Credentials**
Finally I question whether this project can justify its claim to be really 'green' given the quantity of materials required to build the site and the environmental cost of the increase in vehicle movements, in & out, the impact on the local environment offset against the potential outputs of biogas & CO2.

I should be grateful if you would confirm safe receipt of this objection. If you require any further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret May

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