Planning Permission 08/00002/WAS – Farm Based Anaerobic Digestion (AD) Plant at Westwood, Higham Park, Rushden, Northants
Application to vary Condition 5 to allow Bank Holiday deliveries

Summary of Proposal

Biogen (UK) Ltd wish to vary condition 5 of the Planning Permission to allow deliveries of food waste to be made on Bank Holidays to meet a demand from their retail customers.

Deliveries would be lower in number than on a normal working week day. There have been no issues raised during the lifetime of the plant operation relating to impact caused by vehicle movements.

Background

Condition 5 of the Planning Permission states ‘Except as otherwise may be agreed in writing by the Waste Planning Authority the operations involving the importation of waste, removal of non-compostable waste and outside movement of wastes on site hereby permitted, shall be restricted to the hours of 7.00 and 19.00 on Mondays to Fridays and 07.00 to 13.00 on Saturdays, with no operations on Sundays, Public, Statutory or Bank Holidays’

Proposed change to planning condition and reasons

Anaerobic Digestion is recognised as the Best Available Technique for processing food waste, both environmentally and in terms of cost. Food retail companies are increasingly interested in utilising Anaerobic Digestion at Westwood as their preferred method of disposing of food waste. In order to save costs and reduce their environmental impact, food waste is back-loaded by lorries to distribution centres for bulking up before delivery to Biogen, which ultimately reduces lorry movements on the road. However there is limited space at the distribution centres to hold waste, and there is a requirement to keep the supply chain moving.

Biogen has developed strong commercial relationships with retail customers (supermarkets) to treat their food waste. Retailers operate on a continual 24 hour a day, 7 day a week basis and a customer demand has arisen for Biogen to be able to take waste on public holidays (not Christmas Day). Public holidays (particularly the Christmas period) are the busiest time in the calendar for retail sales and consequently a significant volume of food waste is generated in these periods. In order to be able to provide a continuous service to our customers and ensure that they do not incur additional costs through double handling etc, it is important that Biogen is able to take deliveries albeit they will be reduced number compared to a normal working day.

It is worth noting that, as far as we are aware, there have not been any complaints by any third parties relating to vehicle movements to and from the plant during it’s operational lifetime.
This need was identified early in 2011 and Biogen approached the Waste Planning Authority to be temporarily allowed to take waste over the extended Bank Holidays in April and May 2011, which was granted on March 8th 2011. During these periods we accepted an average of eight deliveries per day into the plant.

It is anticipated that the number of deliveries on Bank Holidays in the future would not differ from this average to any great extent.

*Biogen are now seeking to permanently be allowed to take waste on public, statutory and bank holidays, excluding Christmas Day between the times of 7am and 4pm. The original planning application stated there would be 30 goods vehicle movements per day (15 vehicles in and 15 vehicles out). On public holidays, deliveries will be significantly reduced over a standard operating week day, and are anticipated to be no more than 20 goods vehicle movements per day (10 vehicles in and 10 vehicles out).*

**Policy Background**

The existing Anaerobic Digestion plant satisfies the aspirations of European, national, regional and local waste policy in a great number of ways. The proposed variation of condition 5 of the planning permission will allow Biogen to satisfy a demand from the retail sector to dispose of their food waste in a way which is further in accordance with these policy aspirations.

Biogen’s proposal is also consistent with the UK’s international obligations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through measures such as the diversion of organic waste from landfill and the generation of energy from renewable sources.

For the purposes of this document we will reference the Northamptonshire County Council Minerals & Waste Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted in May 2010) and the Northamptonshire County Council Minerals & Waste Development Framework Control of Management & Development (adopted June 2010) as the most relevant policy documents in support of this application.

**NCC Minerals & Waste Development Framework Core Strategy**

Policy CS1 – This application supports this policy’s aims of the development of a sustainable waste management network and to meet the indicative waste management capacities for Biological processing indicated, in this instance by way of Anaerobic Digestion.

Policy CS9 – This application supports the policy’s aim to minimise transport movements by preventing ‘double-handling’ by retailers and allowing them to maintain an efficient supply chain of waste deliveries.

At Section 3 Policy Context Section 3.5 states that the key planning document for waste is PPS10 - Planning for Sustainable Waste Management (and its Companion Guide). This document establishes key principles, of particular significance is the need to drive waste management up the waste hierarchy, addressing waste as a resource, and looking to disposal as the last option but one which must be adequately catered for.
PPS10 also includes among it’s key objectives that regional and local planning bodies should:

Help secure the recovery or disposal of waste without endangering human health and without harming the environment.
Reflect the concerns and interests of communities, the needs of waste collection authorities, waste disposal authorities and businesses.
Ensure the layout and design of new development supports sustainable waste management.

*Anaerobic Digestion is recognised as being at the top of the waste hierarchy. This application supports the Core Strategy need to drive waste management up the waste hierarchy, and to achieve the other objectives set out above.*

At section 3.6 it states the Government’s Waste Strategy 2007 is of particular relevance as it sets the waste management context which planning policy has to have reference to. At 3.7 it states there have been considerable policy changes since the 2000 Waste Strategy. The landfill tax escalator and the introduction of the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) have created sharp incentives to divert waste from landfill. Additional funding for local authorities, including through the private finance initiative (PFI), has led to a major increase in kerbside recycling facilities and new waste treatment facilities. European Directives are targeting specific sectors, including vehicles, electrical and electronic equipment and packaging. However, the aim of moving waste disposal up the waste hierarchy remains a key element.

At 3.8 it states England’s performance on waste still lags behind other European countries. The new Strategy builds on the aims of the National Waste Strategy 2000 to minimise waste and encourage the recycling, composting and recovery of waste in a number of ways:

New targets for the recycling and composting of household waste (at least 40% by 2010, 45% by 2015 and 50% by 2020) and the recovery of municipal waste (53% by 2010, 67% by 2015 and 75% by 2020).

A greater focus on waste prevention, with a new target to reduce the amount of waste not reused, recycled or composted from over 22.2 million tonnes in 2000 by 29% to 15.8 million tonnes in 2010 with an aspiration to reduce it to 12.2 million tonnes in 2020; a reduction of 45%.

Plans to set new targets to reduce the amount of commercial and industrial and also construction, demolition and excavation waste going to landfill as a result of waste reduction, reuse and recycling.

Increasing the landfill tax escalator so that the standard rate of tax will increase by £8 per year from 2008 until at least 2010/2011 to give greater financial incentives to businesses to reduce, reuse and recycle waste.

*This application helps achieve the national policy aim particularly in relation to commercial waste re-use.*

**Regional waste policy** - at section 3.9 it states the Regional Plan sets a minimum target for the recycling and composting of municipal solid waste of 30% by 2010 and 50% by 2015.
3.10 states The Regional Plan is supported by the Regional Waste Strategy (RWS), which although required to be prepared is not a statutory document. It contains the following principles:
working towards zero growth in waste by 2016, reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill, exceeding Government targets for recycling and composting to achieve levels of current best practice, and taking a flexible approach to other forms of waste recovery on the basis that technology in this area is developing very quickly.

3.11 states the RWS was issued in January 2006 and has been used to inform the approach to the MWDF. It identifies apportionments of the waste management capacity required for the three main waste streams by sub-region for the period until 2020. The total quantities are split into categories of recycling / composting requirement, landfill diversion, re-use and disposal. The RWS anticipates zero growth by 2016 and assume recycling rates for municipal waste in line with the Regional Plan.

This application supports the policy aspirations as set out under Regional Waste Policy particularly in relation to reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill and exceeding Government targets for recycling.

STRATEGY FOR WASTE MANAGEMENT & DISPOSAL IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

6.1. In order to determine the quantity and type of facilities needed to manage waste and develop a sustainable waste management network to 2026 and beyond, forecasts of how much waste is likely to be generated within Northamptonshire for both management and disposal were developed.

6.2. Government guidance recommends the development of a gradually declining medium growth profile which incorporates waste management targets. The future growth of waste arisings in Northamptonshire has therefore been identified through the application of such a profile. Municipal waste forecasts are in line with those in the Northamptonshire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy.

The Regional Plan sets out priorities for waste management, including an aspiration to work towards zero growth in waste at the regional level by 2016. In the particular circumstances of Northamptonshire, which will be the fastest growing county in terms of population growth to 2026, this is not considered to be a realistic assumption. The declining growth profile used for the Core Strategy more closely reflects local circumstances (compared with the Regional Plan forecasting which applies zero growth by 2016). This will nevertheless still lead to a reduction in the growth of waste arisings to an appropriate level for the county and drive behavioural change.

6.3. Waste forecasts were used to determine the gap between current and future waste arisings, and subsequently the required additional waste management capacity. The ‘capacity gap’, simply put, is the difference between the current operational waste management capacity and the management capacity required at the end of the plan period. This capacity gap also needs to identify the different types of waste and management methods. Facilities in the county have traditionally been landfill. In comparing the estimated capacity shortfalls by waste planning authority area identified in the Regional Plan it should be noted that there is a small differential in the early years, and in latter years provision in the Core Strategy exceeds the figures in the Regional Plan. Capacity will only be taken up if it is required; this presents a more realistic future scenario given the demands placed on the Regional Plan’s Southern Sub-Area (i.e. Northamptonshire) to absorb extensive development.
6.4. Due to increasing restrictions on disposal to landfill, all waste will require treatment prior to disposal (and this treatment can involve a number of waste management methods, including sorting). The waste management capacity has been identified by management method, including recycling, biological processing, treatment and disposal. It is assumed that re-use and recycling rates will not decrease. In line with PPS10 provision of waste management capacity equivalent to at least ten years of the annual rates set out in the Regional Plan has been demonstrated.

In order to facilitate improved monitoring of waste arisings and uptake of waste management capacity throughout the plan period, indicative waste management capacity has been provided at five year intervals (starting at 2005/06). The indicative future capacity requirements to achieve waste management targets suggest provision needs to be made for waste management facilities to meet the following indicative capacity gaps that will arise by 2026:

- Recycling capacity for municipal and commercial & industrial waste will need to increase by 229,000 tonnes,
- Biological processing capacity for municipal and commercial & industrial waste will need to increase by 221,000 tonnes,
- Waste management or advanced treatment capacity required to deal with the remaining waste (currently disposed of to landfill) will need to increase by 334,000 tonnes, and
- Inert recycling capacity for construction and demolition waste will need to increase by 357,000 tonnes.

It is important to note that there will still be a requirement for disposal to landfill. The total estimated disposal capacity requirement for 2026 is 709,000 tonnes.

6.8. A variety of different types and sized facilities distributed throughout the county will be required to deal appropriately with the different types of waste produced and establish a sustainable waste management network. Given the types of waste produced within Northamptonshire the following types of facilities could be used in combination to support the development of a sustainable waste management network and provide the required capacity:

- Recovery and recycling facilities (including both material recycling facilities and secondary & recycled aggregate facilities for C&D waste),
- Biological processing (including composting and anaerobic digestion),
- Transfer stations (where required to support other facilities),
- Waste to energy physio-chemical (such as thermal (e.g. incineration, gasification, or pyrolysis), fuel substitutes, plasma arc, and feedstock recycling / substitutes),
- Bio-chemical waste treatment, and
- Other waste to energy facilities and emerging technologies.

This application will enhance the provision of Anaerobic Digestion facilities to meet the need outlined above.

Safeguarding waste management and minerals related development from alternative uses

9.24. Existing waste management sites are part of the infrastructure for waste development in Northamptonshire. Depending on individual circumstances, such sites may also have the potential to increase their capacity, or be able to diversify to provide additional waste services and facilities.

9.25. Permanent sites and those with a long term temporary planning permission should
therefore be safeguarded from development for non-waste management uses.

This application complies with the need for an existing waste management site to provide additional waste services in satisfying the requirements of the retail sector.

NCC Minerals & Waste Development Framework Control & Management of Development

This application complies with and supports the following Policies:

Policy CMD1 – Development Criteria for waste management facilities.

Policy CMD2 – Development criteria for waste disposal.

This application enhances ‘the development of a sustainable waste network and facilitates delivery of Northamptonshire’s waste management capacity requirements’.