



We care for the Chilterns

Planning Guidance Statement on Anaerobic Digesters

(Reviewed 2018)

In suitable circumstances anaerobic digesters (AD) have a role to play as an additional source of renewable energy, with the added benefit of providing an opportunity for environmentally friendly waste disposal. Therefore, subject to compliance with the following considerations, and in accordance with the Local Planning Authority's (LPA) Core Strategy and Local Plan the Society will, in principle, be supportive of such applications. This is particularly relevant in an AONB / Conservation area, even if the plant is planned to be sited outside the area.

Planning applications for ADs usually start with a screening / scoping application and, as with the subsequent full planning application, the Planning Group / PFO should have regard to the following considerations when formulating its comments on such applications:

- (1) **Site:** the proposed site must meet stringent requirements with regard to location (the proximity to existing gas mains being a key requirement), visual impact, storage, lighting, screening and maintenance. This includes construction materials, details such as drainage system and provision for collecting surface water, measures to help integrate the site into its surroundings including screening, measures to prevent lighting from becoming a source of nuisance to nearby properties and uses.
- (2) **Smell:** measures to be in place to avoid potentially noxious emissions that would have an adverse impact on the immediate surroundings and on any neighbouring properties.
- (3) **Traffic:** measures to mitigate impact on local traffic, roads and infrastructure both during construction and during operation, with particular attention given to minimise the emission of dust. The proposed number of delivery journeys should be estimated and haul routes identified to minimise impacts on quiet roads, particularly in the AONB.
- (4) The AD should be fuelled only with local agricultural waste crops and slurries so as to minimise road distances and traffic volume. The Society would not wish to see crops grown specifically for the AD.
- (5) Consideration needs to be given to possible consequences should the plant be decommissioned in the future and the site be returned to its original state in order to ensure that its disposal can be carried out with minimal environmental impact on the surrounding area and the avoidance of any ground contamination.

Finally, it is always useful and advisable to liaise closely with any local like-minded organisation (such as CPRE and the Chiltern Conservation Board) as well as the LPA in the context of conforming to the authority's Local Plan.