

Application Number:	P/FUL/2025/00591		
Webpage:	https://planning.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/		
Site address:	Rainbarrow Farm, Anaerobic Digester Plant, Monkey Jump Roundabout To Junction Below Alington Place, Martinstown, DT2 9JF		
Proposal:	Retain digestate lagoon and hardstanding & install proposed lagoon cover		
Applicant name:	Mr Darren Stockley		
Case Officer:	Eleanor Godesar		
Ward Member(s):	Cllr Tarr		
Publicity expiry date:	11 April 2025	Officer site visit date:	19 March 2025
Decision due date:	6 June 2025	Ext(s) of time:	11 June 2025
No. of site notices:	4		
SN displayed reasoning:	Adjoining neighbours and public rights of way		

1. Reason application is going to committee:

Objection from Winterborne Farringdon Parish Council Group (Winterborne Monkton PC)

2. Summary of recommendation:

Grant planning permission subject to conditions set out in section 18.

3. Reason for the recommendation:

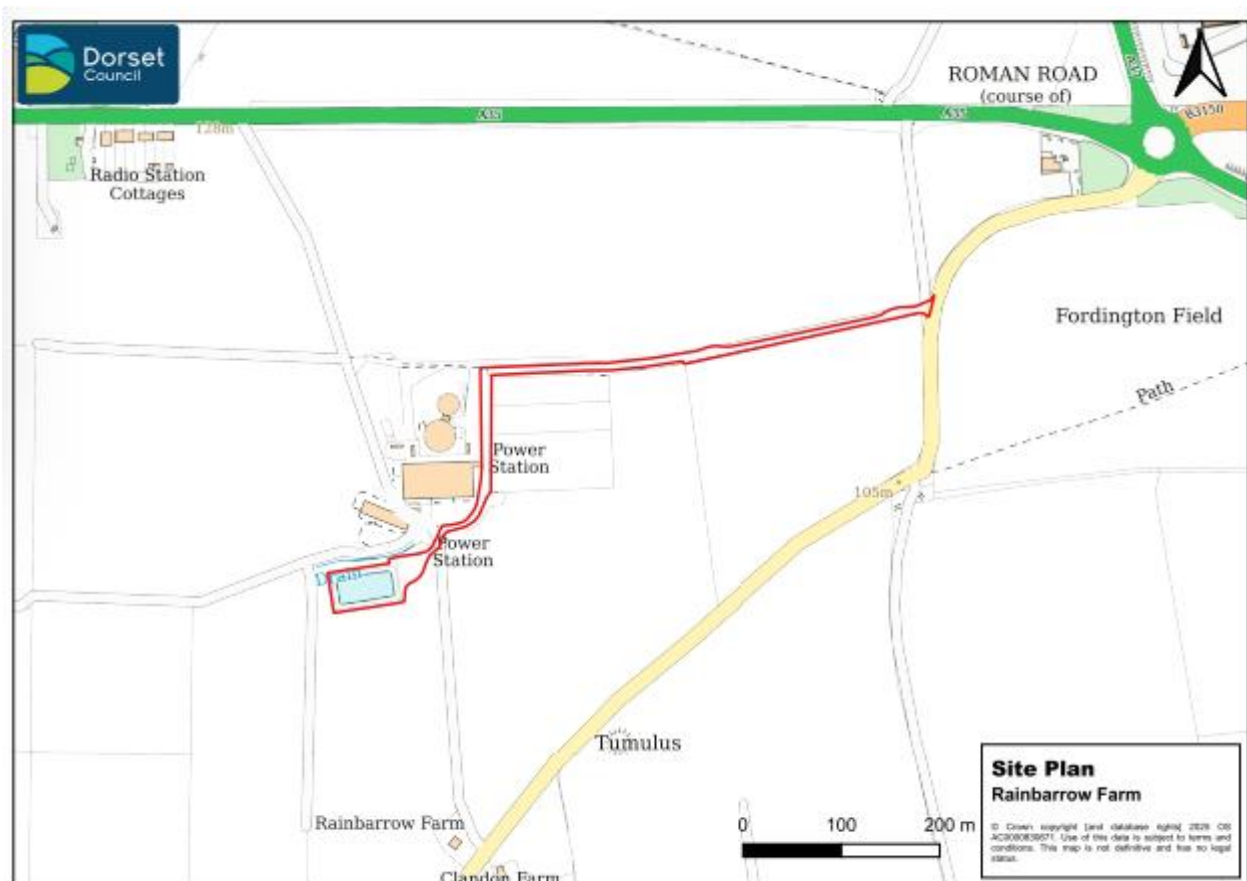
As set out in Sections 16 and 17 of this report.

4. Key planning issues:

Issue	Conclusion
Principle of development	The principle of the siting of a lagoon and associated cover and hardstanding are acceptable within this rural landscape.
Scale, design, impact on landscape character and appearance	Whilst the application site is within the Dorset National Landscapes, there is a need for the adjacent AD plant to have a lagoon to store liquid digestate from the AD process and an alternative location would be unsuitable. The design of the lagoon, fencing and hardstanding would preserve the character of Dorchester Downs Landscape Character Area and would not introduce a type or

Issue	Conclusion
	scale of development which would appear incongruous.
Impact on heritage assets	The setting of surrounding heritage assets would be preserved.
Flood risk and drainage	Recommendations and mitigation provided in the submitted Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy has been secured by condition.
Impact on the living conditions of the occupants and neighbouring properties	Suggested conditions for noise, operating hours and submission of details for possible floodlighting would mitigate against impacts on neighbouring amenity.
Highway impacts, safety, access and parking	Vehicle movements associated with the export of digestate off site lagoon would be low and would not materially impact upon highway capacity or safety.
Biodiversity	No consequence

5. Description of Site



- 5.1 Rainbarrow Farm is located in open countryside, 2.5 km west of Dorchester and 1.2 km west of Poundbury between the A35 (to the north) and Bridport Road / Mallards Green which links Poundbury to Martinstown (to the south). The site is accessed via a track to Rainbarrow Farm, close to the McDonalds restaurant near Monkeys Jump roundabout.
- 5.2 Rainbarrow Farm is a commercial farmstead which also accommodates an Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant. It occupies land on the northern and eastern sides of a large building

(previously agricultural in nature). The AD plant is positioned on the northern side of the building and the four existing feedstock clamps located to the east. The digestate lagoon and associated hardstanding, the subject of this current application, is located to the south west of the AD Plant and feedstock clamps.

- 5.3 The application site is within the Dorset National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and the Dorchester Downs landscape character area with Maiden Castle approximately 1.3 km to the south. There are no public footpaths that cross close to the application site, however, there is a bridleway (S57/7) which traverses from the access gate of the AD Plant on Bridport Road to the A35 to the north.

6. Description of development

- 6.1 The application seeks retrospective permission for the retention of a digestate storage lagoon, associated fencing and hardstanding which were constructed in 2020. The red line boundary of the application site includes the access road through the AD Plant and to the main entrance on Bridport Road. This access road has been in existence since the AD Plant was built in 2012. A cover for the lagoon is proposed, which has not yet been installed.
- 6.2 The current application has been submitted in response to a permitted development enquiry which revealed that the size of the installed lagoon, at around 70m x 40m is approximately 2,800sqm, far exceeds the 1,000sqm tolerance for an engineering operation under the General Permitted Development Order 2015. In addition, the area of hard surfacing to the east that connects to the access track also needs to be considered. The cumulative area of the lagoon and hard surfacing is estimated to be 3900sqm.
- 6.3 A cover is proposed to be installed over the stored digestate lagoon. It would be a black, soft liner which would float on the digestate and below the level of the existing embankment.

7. Background and relevant planning history

1/D/10/001372 - Decision: GRA - Decision Date: 21/04/2011

The construction and operation of an Anaerobic Digestion and Combined Heat and Power Plant and associated infrastructure including a new site access road at Rainbarrow Farm (Site 1) and underground service corridor linking to a new Combined Heat and Power engine in existing Engine House (Site 2) at Poundbury to supply Poundbury with renewable heat and power. (Revised proposal) (Changes to proposed plant, infrastructure and land profiling at Rainbarrow Farm (Site 1)).

1/D/2011/2113 - Decision: GRA - Decision Date: 08/03/2012

Section 73 application to vary condition 2 (Development in Accordance with Technical Details) and 3 (Development in Accordance with Approved Plans) of 1/D/10/001372 to allow amendments to approved layout at Rainbarrow Farm (site 1) to include repositioning of flare and CHP container, and additional equipment to include standby generator, switch gear, back up boiler, DMT Membrane Plant, transformer, 3 tank propane store and new gas pipeline to site boundary, to enable the majority of the gas produced by the anaerobic digester plant to be fed directly into the public gas supply network at the pressure regulating station adjacent Monkey Jump Roundabout

WD/D/17/001149 - Decision: GRA - Decision Date: 01/08/2017

Construction of additional feedstock storage clamp & re-profiling of adjoining ground with spoil; Change of use of part of agricultural building to house equipment associated with capture of CO2 gas and bagging of solid digestate (both by products of AD plant) and their sale off site, with two gas storage tanks positioned adjacent southern side of building.

WD/D/20/000977 - Decision: PNA - Decision Date: 05/05/2020

Excavation and construction of a manure store

P/PDE/2024/00195 - Decision: PDR - Decision Date: 19/08/2024

Cover on slurry lagoon

P/FUL/2024/03497 - Currently being assessed

The construction and operation of an Anaerobic Digestion and Combined Heat and Power Plant and associated infrastructure including a new site access road at Rainbarrow Farm (Site 1) and underground service corridor linking to a new Combined Heat and Power engine in existing Engine House (Site 2) at Poundbury to supply Poundbury with renewable heat and power (Revised proposal) (Changes to proposed plant, infrastructure and land profiling at Rainbarrow Farm (Site 1)) and as varied by 1/D/2011/2113 to include repositioning of flare and CHP container, and additional equipment to include standby generator, switch gear, back up boiler, DMT Membrane Plant, transformer, 3 tank propane store and new gas pipeline to site boundary, to enable the majority of the gas produced by the anaerobic digester plant to be fed directly into the public gas supply network at the pressure regulating station adjacent Monkeys Jump Roundabout (with variation of conditions 27 and 28 of planning permission 1/D/2011/2113 to regularise the existing development by increasing traffic levels, annual feedstock throughput and feedstocks).

8. List of constraints

National Landscapes (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty): Dorset; - Distance: 0m

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) impact risk zone; - Distance: 0m

Natural England Designation - Nutrient Neutrality Catchments - Distance: 0m

Wessex Water Treatment Works Catchment - Distance: 0m

Right of Way: Bridleway S57/7; - Distance: 0m

Medium pressure gas pipeline 12.5m or less from Medium Pressure Pipelines (75mbar - 2 bar); - Distance: 0m

Groundwater Warning Zones 2019; 111FWGSWV1; Groundwater flooding for the South Winterbourne Valley; - Distance: 0m

Poole Harbour Catchment Area - Distance: 0m

Groundwater Source Protection Zone - Distance: 0m

Radon: Class: Class 3: 3 - 5% - Distance: 0m

Radon: Class: Class 1: Less than 1% - Distance: 0m

Contaminated Land - Distance: 0m

9. Consultations

Consultees

All consultee responses can be viewed in full on the website.

9.1 Natural England

No response provided

9.2 Environment Agency

No objection (received 27/03/2025)

- Request an informative to be included with any grant of permission that relates to surface water quality.

9.3 Health and Safety Executive

No comment (received 01/04/2025)

- No need for further comment since the application site does not currently lie within the consultation distance of a major hazard site or major accident hazard pipeline.

9.4 Wessex Water

No response provided

9.5 Ramblers Association

No response provided

9.6 National Landscapes Team

Comments (received 31/03/2025)

- The lagoon serves the anaerobic digester and is not strictly agricultural. Nonetheless, its character is similar to a slurry lagoon and therefore not inherently alien within the rural landscape. The application contains a Landscape Appraisal, which typically defines the impacts of the development as 'negligible', whereas the effects would be more accurately be described as 'minor', due to the largely sub-surface nature of the development and screening by the embankments.
- The overall opinion that impacts on Dorset National Landscape are not significant is accepted.
- Conditions to restrict lighting, maintain post and wire fencing and control the colour of the lagoon cover may be appropriate.

9.7 Landscape Team

No objection (received 31/03/2025)

- There will be some limited views of this development, as described in the Landscape and Visual Appraisal. Some of these viewpoints are particularly sensitive, for example views across the National Landscape/AONB from Maiden Castle. It is therefore very important that the proposed cover is a suitable colour that does not draw attention to this new element in the landscape. The submitted documentation states that this will be black in colour, which is acceptable.
- As suggested by the National Landscape Team, restrictions on lighting, maintaining post and wire fencing and control the colour of the lagoon cover details should be

conditioned. This would ensure that the landscape and visual impacts from this development can be reduced to an acceptable level.

- The overall opinion that impacts on Dorset National Landscape are not significant is accepted.

9.8 Highway Authority

No objection (received 27/03/2025)

- The proposal does not present a material harm to the transport network or to highway safety.

9.9 Environmental Protection

No comment (received 25/03/2025)

9.10 Natural Environment Team

Comments (received 07/05/2025)

- Given the retrospective nature of the application, it is clear that the lagoon has no ecological value now that it is in place. It is likely that the application qualifies under the de minimus BNG exemption although there is no BNG Statement, confirming this.

9.11 Rights of Way

No response received

9.12 Rights of Way

No response received

9.13 Winterborne and Broadmayne Ward Member

No response received

9.14 Winterborne St Martin Parish Council

Objection (received 26/03/2025)

- Concerns relating to the planning history and the cumulative impact of repeated planning breaches.

9.15 Winterborne Farringdon Parish Council Group (Winterborne Monkton PC)

No response received

Representations received

9.16 One representation of objection has been received with the following comments:

- The slurry tankers are using their onboard vacuum pumps for loading, which causes noise disturbance at Radio Station Cottages and windows need to be closed. This is also occurring after 10pm.

- Tractors use their working lights and they light up nearly three fields to the side and rear of the lagoon. This causes light pollution and disturbance to the wildlife such as owls, deer, foxes and bats.

10. Duties

- 10.1 s38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the determination of planning applications must be in accordance with the development plan unless material circumstances indicate otherwise.
- 10.2 s85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) requires Local Planning Authorities to seek to further the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of National Landscape (formerly known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty)

11. Relevant policies

Development Plan

11.1 West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan 2015

To view, click [West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan 2015](#)

INT1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
 ENV1 – Landscape, Seascape and Sites of Geological Interest
 ENV2 – Wildlife and Habitats
 ENV4 – Heritage assets
 ENV5 – Flood risk
 ENV8 – Agricultural Land and Farming Resilience
 ENV9 – Polluted and Contaminated Land
 ENV15 – Efficient and Appropriate Use of Land
 ENV16 – Amenity
 SUS2 – Distribution of Development
 ECON1 – Provision of Employment
 COM7 – Creating a Safe and Efficient Transport Network
 COM9 – Parking Standards in New Development
 COM11 – Renewable Energy Development

11.2 Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan 2019

To view, click [Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan 2019](#)

Policy 1 – Sustainable waste management
 Policy 5 – Facilities to enable the recycling of waste
 Policy 6 – Recovery facilities
 Policy 12 – Transport and access
 Policy 13 – Amenity and quality of life
 Policy 14 – Landscape and design quality
 Policy 15 – Sustainable construction and operation facilities
 Policy 16 – Natural resources
 Policy 17 – Flood risk
 Policy 18 – Biodiversity and habitat
 Policy 19 – Historic environment

Material Considerations

11.3 Emerging local plans

Paragraph 48 of the NPPF provides that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant plan policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF (the closer the policies in the emerging plan are to the policies of the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

11.4 The Dorset Council Local Plan

To view, click [Dorset Council Local Plan - Dorset Council](#)

The Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation took place between January and March 2021. Being at a very early stage of preparation, the relevant policies in the Draft Dorset Council Local Plan should be accorded very limited weight in decision making.

11.5 National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (as amended February 2025)

To view, click [National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK](#)

Paragraph 11 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development plan proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay. Where the development plan is absent, silent, or relevant policies are out-of-date then permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of approval would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF or specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted.

Other relevant NPPF sections include:

- Section 4 Decision taking (paragraphs 39, 48 – 50)
- Section 6 Building a strong, competitive economy (paragraph 85) and supporting a prosperous rural economy (paragraphs 88 and 89)
- Section 9 Promoting sustainable transport (paragraph 115)
- Section 11 Making effective use of land (paragraph 124)
- Section 14 Meeting the challenges of climate change, flooding and coastal change (paragraph 172)
- Section 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment – Habitats and biodiversity (paragraphs 187, 192 - 195 set out how biodiversity is to be protected and encourage net gains for biodiversity), National Landscapes (paragraph 190) and Ground conditions and pollution (paragraphs 198 and 201)
- Section 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (paragraphs 207 – 216)

11.6 Other material considerations

- Dorset AONB Management Plan 2019-2024

- Dorset County Council Landscape Character Assessment (Open Chalk Downland)
- Producing a Proposal for Covering Slurry Stores EPR 6.09 Sector Guidance Note February 2012
- National Planning Policy for Waste October 2014
- Noise Policy Statement for England 2010 (NPSE)
- Dorset Council Interim Guidance and Position Statement Appendix B: Adopted Local Plan policies and objectives relating to climate change, renewable energy, and sustainable design and construction. December 2023.

11.7 EIA Development

The development has been screened by Dorset Council (as the relevant competent authority) under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (EIA Regs). The proposal does not fall under any of the categories in Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 of the EIA Regs. Review of the criteria listed in Schedule 3 has not revealed any likely significant effects of the development on the environment. The development would not require environmental impact assessment under the terms of the previous Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations. Therefore, the development is not EIA development.

11.8 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

The application site is approximately 9400 metres from Dorset Heathlands (Special Protection Area, Special Area of Conservation and Ramsar), 9400 metres from Chesil Beach and The Fleet (Special Protection Area, Special Area of Conservation and Ramsar) and 7200 metres from Cerne and Sydling Downs (Special Area of Conservation), which are European designated sites.

Should likely significant effects be identified by the screening process it is necessary to further consider the effects by way of an Appropriate Assessment, in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, Article 6 (3) of the Habitats Directive and having due regard to its duties under Section 40(1) of the NERC Act 2006 to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

However, given the significant separation distance from these protected sites and the nature of the development, the proposal would not have likely significant effect on European sites and further Habitat Regulations Assessment, in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), would not be necessary.

12. **Human rights**

Article 6 - right to a fair trial.

Article 8 - right to respect for private and family life and home.

The first protocol of Article 1 protection of property.

This recommendation is based on adopted development plan policies, the application of which does not prejudice the human rights of the applicant or any third party.

13. **Public Sector Equalities Duty**

- 13.1 As set out in the Equalities Act 2010, all public bodies, in discharging their functions must have “due regard” to this duty. There are 3 main aims:
- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
 - Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people
 - Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where participation is disproportionately low.
- 13.2 Whilst there is no absolute requirement to fully remove any disadvantage, the Duty is to have “regard to” and remove or minimise disadvantage and in considering the merits of this planning application the planning authority has taken into consideration the requirements of the Public Sector Equalities Duty. This current application is not considered to have any impact upon those with a protected characteristic.

14. Financial benefits

- 14.1 Employment, particularly statutory and site operators during the lifetime of the development and on the farms which produce the feedstock (limited benefit).

15. Environmental Implications

- 15.1 At a national level the Government aims to reduce carbon emissions by 80% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2050 and fully decarbonise the electricity grid by 2035. The Government aims to achieve these targets in a number of ways, including through development of up to 50GW of offshore wind by 2030 and a fivefold increase in solar by 2035 (Powering Up Britain, 2023).
- 15.2 In May 2019 Dorset Council declared a Climate Emergency and there is a heightened expectation that the planning process will secure carbon footprint reductions in new developments.
- 15.3 The lagoon features an impermeable liner layer, to ensure the digestate content cannot leach out to ground. The proposed lagoon cover is anticipated to reduce any potential for odour impacts.

16. Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

- 16.1 The lagoon is used to store digestate, which is a product of the Anaerobic Digester Plant (AD Plant), and some surface water runoff from the main site. The AD Plant has been in operation since 2012. The digestate is used as a fertiliser which is either spread directly onto land associated with Rainbarrow Farm or is exported to Bardolf Lagoon (near Burleston) for spreading on land there. Digestate is exported from the lagoon throughout the year with a peak in March.

- 16.2 The installed lagoon is located in open countryside and has a modest scale and similar appearance to other lagoons located on agricultural land in this rural landscape.
- 16.3 A lagoon cover is proposed so the lagoon would comply with the recommendations of the Environment Agent.
- 16.4 The principle of retaining the existing lagoon and hardstanding and the proposed lagoon cover are acceptable in principle and would be in accordance with Policy INT1 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan 2015.

Scale, Design, Impact on Landscape Character and Appearance

- 16.5 As discussed above, the digestate storage lagoon, associated fencing and hardstanding have already been constructed and is in use. A soft lagoon cover is proposed.
- 16.6 A Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been submitted to support the application. It identifies the application site as being within the Dorchester Downs (Open Chalkland Downland), as defined by the Dorset National Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). The LCA assesses the strength of character of the Dorchester Downs with the Dorset National Landscape as 'moderate-weak' and identifies that 'towards the urban fringe of Dorchester and associated road corridors, strength of character is weaker than the more rural areas in the eastern and western extents'. The application site was identified by the LCA to contribute to the overall character of Dorchester Downs. However, it does not constitute as valued landscape on its own merit.
- 16.7 In terms of visual impact, the LVA identified some limited views of this development, including the open access land within Maiden Castle to the south, the public right of way to the south (Four Barrow Hill and National Cycle Route No. 2) and closer views from Bridport Road to the south and A35 to the north.
- 16.8 Views from Maiden Castle would be limited to the northern slopes with a separation distance of approximately 1.3 km. Due to the relatively minor scale of the proposal, there would be limited visual change when compared to the baseline view prior to the lagoon being constructed. The National Landscape Team considers that there would be a minor impact upon the landscape, due to the largely sub-surface nature of the development and screening by the embankments, with the overall opinion that impacts on Dorset National Landscape are not significant.
- 16.9 From closer viewpoints from public rights of way and the A35, the lagoon is not visually apparent, with the fence posts lining the perimeter indicating its existence. The lagoon cover is proposed to be black in colour, which would maintain this inconspicuous appearance. The LVA found that the hardstanding is only visible at one viewpoint. The lagoon and hardstanding are viewed within the context of the AD Plant and do not appear incongruous with the surrounding landscape.
- 16.10 The closest public viewpoints are along Bridport Road and A35. Neither of these roads have footpaths where there are open views towards the application site, with the site being more likely to be observed by people within vehicles travelling at speed. Therefore, the landform, intervening vegetation and design of the lagoon result in the visual effect being

concluded by the LVA as negligible, although the Council's National Landscape Team would suggest as minor.

- 16.11 The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 190) requires that applications be assessed in terms of the need for the development, consideration of locating the development outside the National Landscape and detrimental effects on the environment. The lagoon, cover, fencing and hardstanding are directly linked to the AD Plant and are required to enable to storage of liquid digestate before it is exported to farms that supply feedstock, including Rainbarrow Farm. The design of the lagoon, fencing and hardstanding is in keeping with the character of Dorchester Downs LCA and would not introduce a type or scale of development which would appear incongruous. The development is visually contained with views limited to a 1.6 km radius. The effects on the National Landscape are localised and overall negligible. The development is therefore in accordance with Policy ENV1 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan 2015 and paragraph 190 of the NPPF.

Heritage Assets

- 16.12 A Heritage Statement has been submitted and identifies a number of heritage assets within 1km of the application site. Four scheduled monuments are identified, the closest being approximately 760m from the application site. The scheduled monument of Maiden Castle is also considered and has a separation distance of approximately 1.3km.
- 16.13 Given the significant separation distances, the proposal would result in no harm to the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets. The proposal would accord with Policy ENV4 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan 2015 and paragraphs 212 – 216 of the NPPF.

Biodiversity

- 16.14 The digestate lagoon and hardstanding are located on land which was previously part of an arable field of little ecological value. There are no habitats identified within the application red line boundary and the lagoon itself is unsuitable as a wildlife habitat. The proposal therefore has no consequence to protected species and in accordance with Policy ENV2 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan 2015.
- 16.15 Given that the lagoon and hardstanding are existing and the lagoon has not ecological value as a habitat, the application is regarded as de minimis in terms of Biodiversity Net Gain.

Highways

- 16.16 The hardstanding and access associated with this application are linked to the wider site of the AD Plant. Digestate is pumped directly into the lagoon from the anaerobic digester so there are not vehicle movements associated with this.
- 16.17 All spreading of liquid digestate is managed by a single contractor. It is either spread direct onto land on Rainbarrow Farm or exported to Bardolf lagoon (near Burleston), approximately 9.5 miles away, for spreading on land around that area. Liquid digestate is removed from the lagoon via tractor/tanker loads.

16.18 The applicant has provided digestate loads over an 11 month period from June 2024 to April 2025. These figures have been provided as a monthly total and a daily average, which is based upon a conservative 6 days per week. It is important to note, however, that these figures assume that 100% of the digestate would be exported via the local highway network and 0% would be retained for use on the fields on Rainbarrow Farm. This is therefore considered to be a worse case scenario and the actual loads that would use the highway network would be much lower. The table below shows the monthly totals and daily averages and range from 1 load per day in June 2024 to 16 loads per day in March 2025. It is noted that all daily averages, with the exception of March 2025, are less than 10 loads per day as a worst case.

	June 24	July 24	Aug 24	Sept 24	Oct 24	Nov 24	Dec 24	Jan 25	Feb 25	Mar 25	Apr 25	Average
Total	35	179	87	106	148	160	176	53	232	407	180	160
Per Day	1	7	3	4	6	6	7	2	9	16	7	6

16.19 Figures provided above demonstrate that vehicle movements associated with export of liquid digestate off site would be low and would not detrimentally impact upon highway capacity or safety. As such, the proposal would in accordance with Policy COM7 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan 2015.

Flood and Pollution Risk

16.20 A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Strategy have been submitted. The site is located within Flood Zone 1, with very low risk of fluvial sources flooding, and is also at very low risk of tidal flooding and surface water flooding. However, part of the site is identified as being in an area at risk of groundwater flooding by the Environment Agency's 2019 warning zones.

16.21 The lagoon features an impermeable liner layer, to ensure the digestate content cannot leach out into the ground. Surface water flows from the lagoon's waterproof cover would not result in a contaminant risk and are recommended to be discharged directly into a geocellular soakaway. Details of this soakaway are found in the submitted Drainage Strategy and could be secured by condition.

16.22 The FRA identified that within the application site there is low risk of groundwater flooding at finished site levels, however a risk may be present to excavations. Two trial pits were excavated for infiltration testing and did not encounter groundwater. The area of hardstanding and the proposed soakaway are positioned to the east of the lagoon in an area outside the EA's 2019 warning zones for groundwater flooding. The FRA considers that groundwater flooding is unlikely during excavation of the soakaway, however the risk remains. Mitigation suggested within the FRA could be secured by condition.

16.23 With appropriate mitigation secured in relation to surface water and groundwater, the proposal would not result in an increased risk of flooding or pollution and would be in accordance with Policies ENV5 and ENV9 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan 2015.

Neighbouring Amenity

- 16.24 The closest neighbours to the application site are the Radio Station Cottages approximately 395 metres to the north west. There is also a cluster of dwellings on Bridport Road at a similar distance from the application site.
- 16.25 A neighbour representation has raised concerns about noise and lighting associated with vehicles exporting liquid digestate at night time. Figures provided by the applicant suggest that exports of digestate from the lagoon using a tractor and tanker are typically between 7am – 5pm October to February, although not daily, and 6:30am – 9pm, although occasionally later, during March to September.
- 16.26 The main site has a condition requiring operating hours between 07:00 to 18:00 hours Mondays to Fridays and 07:00 to 13:00 hours on Saturdays. Given the amenity concerns raised by the neighbour about evening vehicle movements, a condition for export of digestate with the same operating hours as the main site would also be appropriate for this proposal, along with a lighting condition.
- 16.27 Subject to a restriction on operating hours and potential future lighting, the lagoon, hardstanding and proposed cover would not result in any additional impacts to neighbouring amenity. The proposal would therefore accord with Policy ENV16 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan 2015.

17. Conclusion

- 17.1 The principle of a lagoon and associated cover and hardstanding are considered to be acceptable within this rural landscape.
- 17.2 Whilst the application site is within the Dorset National Landscapes, there is a need for the lagoon to store liquid digestate from the AD Plant and an alternative location would be unsuitable. The design of the lagoon, fencing and hardstanding is in keeping with the character of Dorchester Downs Landscape Character Area and would not introduce a type or scale of development which would appear incongruous.
- 17.3 The setting of surrounding heritage assets would be preserved.
- 17.4 The proposal would have no consequence to biodiversity.
- 17.5 Figures provided by the applicant demonstrate that vehicle movements associated with export of liquid digestate off site would be low and would not detrimentally impact upon highway capacity or safety.
- 17.6 Conditions could be secured to mitigate for flood risk and neighbouring amenity.
- 17.7 The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policies ENV1, ENV2, ENV4, ENV5, ENV9, ENV16 and COM7 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan 2015.

18. Recommendation

Grant Planning Permission subject to the following conditions:

1. Plans List - Approved

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

IXO_RF_00_001 0 Site Location Plan

IXO_RF_10_001 0 Site Layout Plan

003 Site Sections Plan

60349-CDY-XX-XX-DR-C-0050 C Proposed Drainage Layout

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

2. Colour of the Lagoon Cover

The lagoon cover shall be installed within 3 months of the date of this permission and be black in colour, as specified in the Planning Statement dated 28 January 2025, and shall be retained and maintained for as long as the lagoon is in use.

Reason: To minimise any impact on the surrounding landscape and in accordance with Policy ENV1 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan 2015 and Policy 14 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan 2019.

3. Noise Levels

The development hereby permitted shall be undertaken and operate within the noise parameters as set out within the Noise Assessment document (Revised Proposal) dated June 2010 and revised December 2010 submitted as part of the planning application reference number 1/D/10/001372.

Reason: To ensure that the proposal does not result in any adverse impact on the amenities of the surrounding area and nearby residential properties and in accordance with Policy ENV16 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan 2015 and Policy 13 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan 2019.

4. Operating Hours

Vehicle movements on the site shall only be undertaken between the hours of 07:00 to 20:00 hours on Mondays to Fridays and 07:00 to 13:00 hours on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays, Bank, or Public Holidays.

Reason: To protect the amenities of nearby properties from harm and in accordance with Policy ENV16 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan 2015 and Policy 13 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan 2019.

5. Floodlighting

No floodlighting or security lighting shall be installed on the application site surface unless details of its location, height, design, sensors, hours of proposed use and luminance have previously been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. Any lighting shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect the amenities of nearby properties from harm and in accordance with Policy ENV16 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan 2015 and Policy 13 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan 2019.

6. Flood Risk Mitigation

Recommendations and mitigation provided in the Flood Risk Assessment (ref. 14313-R01 dated March 2025) and Drainage Strategy (ref. 60349w0001c dated 15 January 2025) shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details. The soakaway, as shown on Proposed Drainage Layout & Schedules drawing number 60349-CDY-XX-XX-DR-C-0050 Rev C updated on 15 January 2025 shall be retained and maintained in effective order throughout the use of the site.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding, and to protect water quality for the benefit of the local habitat and to comply with Policies ENV5 and ENV9 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan 2015.

Informative Notes:

1. National Planning Policy Framework Statement

In accordance with paragraph 39 of the NPPF the council, as Local Planning Authority, takes a positive approach to development proposals and is focused on providing sustainable development.

The council works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:

- offering a pre-application advice service, and
- as appropriate updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions.

In this case:

- The applicant/agent was updated of any issues and provided with the opportunity to address issues identified by the case officer.
- The application was acceptable as submitted and no further assistance was required.

2. Surface Water Quality

The proposed development must fully comply with the terms of The Water Resources (Control of Pollution) (Silage, Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil) (England) (SSAFO) Regulations 2010 and as amended 2013. Environmental good practice advice is available in The Code of Good Agricultural Practice (COGAP) for the protection of water, soil and air (produced by DEFRA). The applicant is advised to review the existing on-farm slurry storage and ensure compliance with the SSAFO Regulations.

You must inform the Environment Agency, verbally (Tel: 03708 506 506) or in writing, of a new, reconstructed or enlarged slurry store, silage clamp or fuel stores at least 14 days before starting any construction work. The notification must include the type of structure, the proposed design and construction, and once an agreed proposal has been constructed we will ask you to send us a completed WQE3 notification form before you start using the facility.

Further guidance is available:

Storing silage, slurry and agricultural fuel oil

Protecting our Water, Soil and Air: A Code of Good Agricultural Practice for farmers, growers and land managers