

Application Number:	P/FUL/2025/04692
Webpage:	https://planning.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/
Site address:	Wessex Farm Sherborne Causeway Shaftesbury SP7 9PX
Proposal:	The construction and operation of an anaerobic digestion facility, ancillary infrastructure, landscaping and vehicular access between the site and the public highway
Applicant name:	1st Estate Biomethane Ltd
Case Officer:	Eleanor Godesar
Ward Members:	Cllr Potheary, Cllr Ridout and Cllr Woode

1. Reason application is going to committee:

Objections from Motcombe Parish Council, Shaftesbury Town Council and Gillingham Town Council

2. Summary of recommendation:

GRANT planning permission subject to conditions set out in section 16.

3. Key planning issues

As set out in sections 14 and 15 of this report, in summary:

Issue	Conclusion
Principle of development	The proposal would recover waste since it produces energy through biogas and some electricity. Nutrients would be returned to agricultural land as liquid and solid digestates. As such, waste would be moved up the waste hierarchy and is acceptable in principle.
Design	Use of appropriate colour finishes and landscaping would be key to mitigating against the proposal's scale and appearance on the character of the area.
Landscape	Whilst there would remain a degree of landscape and visual harm resulting from the proposal, the longer-term adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity would not be significant.
National Landscape	The separation distance of the development from the boundary with the National Landscape, the provision of an effective landscape planting scheme and the accepted increase in vehicle movements generated by the proposal would not result in harm to the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs National Landscape.

Issue	Conclusion
Highways	The proposal would result in no more than 1.31% increase in vehicle movements along the A30 Sherborne Causeway. This percentage has been calculated as a worst case for the AM peak period during the harvest months. The proposed widened entrance and new access with passing places would improve road safety for existing residents and Wessex Farm.
Feedstock and Digestate	The aim is that feedstock would be endeavoured to be sourced within a 15 mile radius of Wessex Farm. Solid and liquid digestate would be primarily used on agricultural land where the feedstock was supplied from.
Ecology	Implementation of precautionary measures and mitigation would ensure the proposal would not result in negative impacts on protected species such as great crested newts, dormice and bats. Ecological enhancements have also been identified.
Biodiversity Net Gain	BNG would deliver on-site significant habitats which would require managing and monitoring for 30 years.
Protected Trees	Trees protected by the area tree preservation order would be preserved through appropriate tree protection and mitigation.
Climate	The proposal would be at least carbon neutral and would positively respond to Dorset Council's climate and ecological emergency.
Air Quality	The baseline air quality in the local area is good and the proposal would not have an adverse impact on air quality.
Odour	The potential for odorous effects of feedstock and AD products upon the amenity of neighbouring residential receptors would be minimised through effective management of the facility and an odour management plan.
Noise	Acoustic enclosure measures would be provided on several structures at the facility. The daytime noise generated from the proposal would comfortably fall below the existing background noise climate. Night time noise is anticipated to fall within the 'Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level'.
Pest Management	The site would have a routine which would include staff training, regular hygiene and cleaning, equipment maintenance, inspections and response to potential incidences of pests.
Neighbouring Amenity	Suggested conditions for noise, operating hours and submission of details for possible floodlighting

Issue	Conclusion
	would mitigate against impacts on neighbouring amenity.
Heritage Assets	The proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the nearest heritage assets and their settings which is outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.
Flood risk and drainage	The flood risk to the site is compatible with the proposed development. Infiltration has been demonstrated to be unviable as a surface water disposal method and discharge to the adjacent watercourse is accepted.

4. Description of site

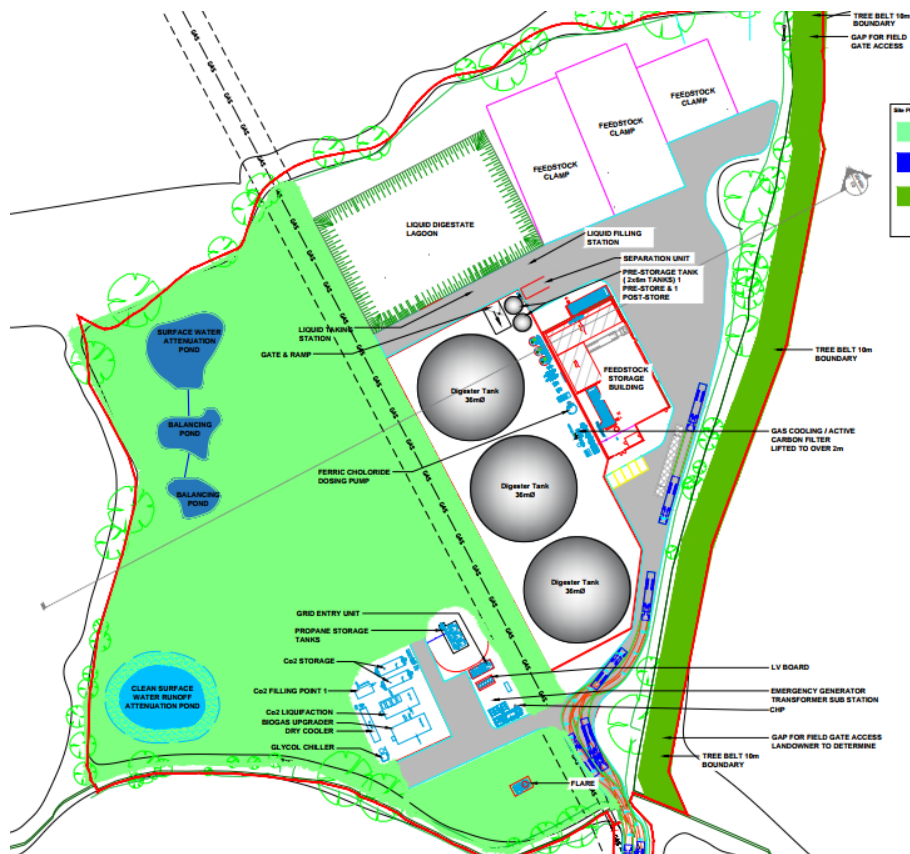
- 1.1 The application site is located approximately 2km to the west of Shaftesbury, and 4km south-east of Gillingham. The application site area is 6.16 hectares (including the access track), with the main part of the site (approximately 5ha) located within an agricultural field and forms part of Wessex Farm. The agricultural land classification is predominantly 4 (poor) and is used to grow maize crop. The access road and main farm complex are located to the south. The proposed site is surrounded by pasture and other open agricultural land to the north, east and west. The land is generally level, with a gentle incline down from the north east to the south west. Land around the site slopes up to a higher level, with the Wessex Farm buildings and dwellings along the A30 on higher ground than the application site.
- 1.2 The proposed site is surrounded on all sides by mature hedgerows, which vary in height and density. Some hedgerows also contain trees, primarily on the eastern and northern boundaries. The northern boundary hedgerow also comprises a post and wire fence. The hedgerow on the southern boundary is intermittent. The site is covered by a Tree Preservation Order.
- 1.3 There are parallel watercourses to the north and south, which follow the hedgerows in a west-to-east direction; the southern watercourse is Fern Brook, while the northern watercourse is an un-named tributary.
- 1.4 The proposed site is accessed from the A30 Sherborne Causeway. A new track is proposed to the west of the main Wessex Farm complex which would then join the existing track further north and then enter the field associated with the main part of the application site.



- 1.5 Residential and some commercial properties are located on both sides of the A30 in proximity of the site access. The closest dwelling includes Wessex Farm itself, which is part of the Wessex Farm complex and is located south east of the application site. Foxview is also part of Wessex Farm. This dwelling is located on the north side of the A30 and approximately 350m from the main part of the application site.
- 1.6 The application site is within Blackmore Vale and the Gillingham Royal Forest area. The ancient woodland associated with Duncliffe Hill is approximately 1250m to the south west. Castle Hill on the western side of Shaftesbury is approximately 1750m to the south east. The western edge of Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs National Landscape is approximately 2000m to the east. The closest biodiversity designation is the Breach Fields Site of Significant Scientific Interest (SSSI) at approximately 1120m to the south east.
- 1.7 There are a number of heritage assets in the area. Grade II listed Silver Ley and Woolcotts Farm are residential properties on the southern side of the A30 and close to the application site access. The two scheduled monuments at Castle Hill are on elevated ground and the 'Late Saxon Urban Area East of Castle Hill' scheduled monument includes a publicly accessible park that has views towards the application site.
- 1.8 Wessex Farm operates an agricultural feedstock haulage business. Agricultural feedstock is the proposed input of the proposed Anaerobic Digester.

5. Description of development

- 1.9 Anaerobic digestion refers to a biological process where micro-organisms break down organic matter in the absence of oxygen. The proposal would involve a 'wet' process in which feedstock would be pumped into the primary digesters and then continuously stirred to produce biogas. The partly digested substrate would then be pumped into the single secondary digester to enable further biogas production. The digestion process would be a contained system within the on-site three digesters to ensure anaerobic digestion could occur.

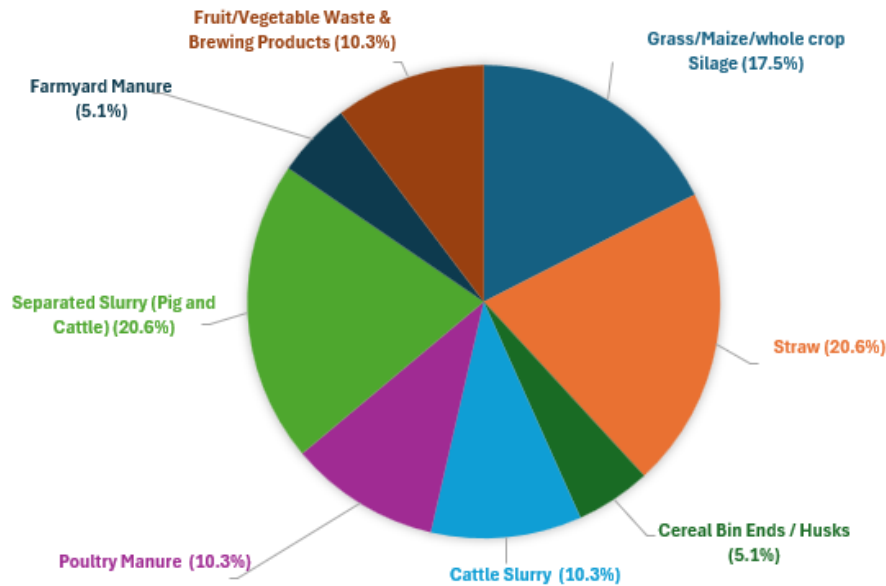


1.10 The proposed facility would consist of the following:

- Three digesters – one primary digester and two secondary digesters (36m diameter to max height of 12m from ground level)
- Three feedstock clamps (51m x 26m; 52.5m x 26m; 28m x 26m)
- Liquid Digestate Lagoon 9000m³ capacity
- Containment wall 2m in height
- Two pre-storage tanks (6m diameter x 6m high)
- Feedstock building (48.2m x 26m x 11.6m high)
- Combined heat and power (CHP) equipment (12m x 3.2m x 3.2m high)
- Emergency generator (3.3m x 1.13m x 2.29m high)
- Propane storage (10.8m x 5.8m x 2.0m high)
- Biomethane upgrading plant (10m x 3m x 3m high)
- CO₂ capture & liquefaction (or liquification) plant
- CO₂ storage (3.2m x 11m x 4m high)
- Glycol chiller (3.2m x 3.2m x 3m high)
- Dry cooler (12.3m x 2.3m x 2m high)
- Grid entry unit (8m x 3m x 3m high)
- Standby flare stack (height 8.22m)
- Pasteurisation unit (3 tanks combined 4m x 10.4m x 8.05m high)
- Buffer tank (6m diameter x 6m high)
- Separation unit (8.7m high)
- Office (11.6m high)
- Car parking spaces for five vehicles

1.11 97,000 tonnes of feedstock is proposed to be used annually and would be comprised of agricultural crops and waste. The agricultural crops would include grass/maize/whole crop

silage (17,000 tonnes) and straw (20,000 tonnes). Waste is proposed to include cereal bin ends/husks (5,000 tonnes), cattle slurry (10,000 tonnes), poultry manure (10,000 tonnes) separated slurry (pig and cattle) (20,000 tonnes), farmyard manure (5,000 tonnes) and fruit / vegetable waste and brewing products (10,000 tonnes).



- 1.12 Feedstock would be stored in two areas. Clamps would store the crop feedstocks and some farmyard manures and slurries. Feedstock within these clamps would be covered in a retractable geotextile material to preserve the biomass from aerobic spoilage until it is fed into the anaerobic digester and to contain odours from release. The cover would be drawn back only as far as necessary to enable new feedstock to be added and compacted within the clamp, or to take material to the Anaerobic Digester Facility (AD Facility). Effluent from beneath the clamps would be collected separately from clean storm water drainage to enable its use in the AD Facility.
- 1.13 The other materials that would be fed into the AD Facility would be delivered to a purpose built manure building, described as the Feedstock Unit on the submitted elevations and floor plan drawing (0489-02-B-Wessex Farm-Store). The purpose of this building would be to store more odorous materials. Litter and manures would be delivered to the building in sealed HGVs. The doors would remain closed at all times, other than when receiving deliveries. The doors would be closed before tipping of materials to minimise emissions of odour to the air. The doors would be re-opened for exiting of vehicles on completion of tipping.
- 1.14 The manure building would have a negative internal air pressure system. Extraction fans would be used to draw air into the building when the doors are open so odours remain inside. Air within the building would pass through a biofilter to reduce odours.
- 1.15 A macerator would be located within the building to pre-treat feedstock such as straw and crop residues. The macerator would reduce and homogenise the substrate to optimise digestion.
- 1.16 Sizing of the clamps and manure building are designed to provide sufficient on-site storage. This would ensure adequate supply for the AD Facility during extreme weather or other exceptional circumstances that would disrupt a normal delivery regime.
- 1.17 Solid and liquid feedstocks would be transferred to the primary digestors by hoppers. The silage (solid) feedstock hopper would be outside and adjacent to the manure building. The

hopper for manures would be inside the building to contain odour. The digestors would use continuous-flow stirred tank reactor (CSTR) technology operating paddle stirrers at controlled temperatures. Continuous agitation of organic matter facilitates the mixing of microorganisms to enable homogenisation and resulting in uniform production of gas.

- 1.18 Substrate from the primary digestors would then pass to the secondary digester for further degradation to maximise production and extraction of biogas. The digestors would have a double membrane domed roof with the inner membrane being impermeable but flexible to accommodate a variable rate and volume of gas production.
- 1.19 The AD Facility is planned to produce approximately 18.3 million cubic metres of biogas that would be upgraded to 9.9 million cubic metres of biomethane. Carbon dioxide (CO₂) would be captured during the upgrade process and purified to a marketable product. It would be temporarily stored in tanks and removed by tanker. Following the upgrade to biomethane, the gas would be prepared to the correct pressure and calorific value and injected into the grid. Some of the biomethane would be diverted to the Combined Heat and Power (CHP) unit, which would generate electricity for on-site use.
- 1.20 The AD Facility would also produce solid and liquid digestate. These would be pumped into pasteurisation tanks before being separated for use on land as fertiliser. Approximately 100 tonnes of solid digestate would be produced per day. It would be stored in the Separation Building and then transported off site 5 days a week (up to 200 tonnes stored at any one time). Approximately 120 tonnes of liquid digestate would be produced per day. This would be drained and pumped to a liquid digestate storage lagoon with a 9000 tonne maximum capacity. In combination with off site storage, there would be the capacity to accommodate 6 months of digestate production to allow for seasonal and regulatory restrictions associated with application to land as fertiliser.

6. Background and relevant planning history

Whilst not directly related to the proposed development, the following planning history is relevant for consideration:

Description	Number	Decision	Date
Erect (agricultural worker's) bungalow	2/1990/0476	Grant	03/03/1995
Develop land by erection of a replacement farmhouse and repositioning of farm access	2/1996/0543	Grant	22/05/1997
Re-siting of farmhouse previously approved by Planning Permission 2/96/0543)	2/1998/0091	Grant	19/10/1998
Change of use of agricultural store to dwelling and business use and carry out associated alterations. Change of use of agricultural land/yard to a mixed use of agriculture and haulage business.	2/2014/0555/PLNG	Grant	16/09/2014
Removal of Condition No. 8 from Planning Permission 2/2014/0555 to incorporate rest room, office, changing room, showers and wc's into the dwelling.	2/2017/0413/VARIA	Grant	24/05/2017

Pre-application advice for development of an Agricultural Feedstock Anaerobic Digestion Facility	P/PAP/2022/00756		31/03/2023
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7. List of constraints

Constraint	Description	Distance
Grade II Listed Building	Silver Ley List Entry: 1110292	19.51m
Grade II Listed Building	Woolcotts Farm List Entry: 1152320	21.99m
Tree Preservation Order	NDDC/TPO-462-10	0m
SGN	Medium pressure gas pipeline 12.5m or less from 12.5m Buffer on Regional Medium Pressure Pipelines (75 mbar – 2 bar)	0m
Dorset Council Land Freehold	Land for road improvement along Sherborne Causeway near Hunts Farm, Motcombe - Reference FH001684	0m
Dorset Council Land Freehold	Land for road improvement along A30 near Causeway Farm, Motcombe - Reference FH001685	0m
Wildlife Present	S41 - Important Amphibian	1.59m
Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (5km buffer)	Fontmell & Melbury Downs (UK0012550)	4235.06m
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Breach Fields	1100m
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) impact risk zone		0m
Environment Agency	Risk of Surface Water Flooding Extent 1 in 30	0m
Environment Agency	Risk of Surface Water Flooding Extent 1 in 100	0m
Environment Agency	Risk of Surface Water Flooding Extent 1 in 1000	0m
Flood	1 in 100 year event plus 20% allowance	0m
Flood	1 in 100 year event plus 40% allowance	0m
Radon	Class: 1.0	0m

8. Consultations

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

8.1 Natural England

No objection, subject to securing mitigation (received 02/10/2025)

- A number of bats use the location for foraging. Ecological enhancements recommended in the Ecological Assessment and measures such as a lighting strategy should be secured by condition.

- A Construction Environmental Management Plan should be submitted that identifies the steps and procedures that will be implemented to avoid or mitigate constructional impacts on species and habitats. Impacts associated with avoidance measures with respect to nesting birds; lighting strategy for bats; storage of construction materials/chemicals and equipment; dust suppression; chemical and/or fuel run-off from construction into nearby watercourses; waste disposal and noise/visual/vibrational impacts should be addressed.

8.2 Historic England

No site specific comments (09/10/2025)

- Historic England provides advice when our engagement can add most value. In this case we are not offering advice.

8.3 Environment Agency

No objection (17/10/2025)

- Processing of crop based material via anaerobic digestion is not currently listed as a permissible activity in the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016.
- Provides advice on the types of permits required for digesting wastes, including manures, possible recycled materials to be used for construction of the track and any material and topsoil removed from the site.
- Anaerobic digestion an inherently odorous activity and appropriate measures must to taken to protect local amenity.
- Produced gases need to be efficiently collected to minimise their release and impact on potential global warming.
- Collection and transportation of liquid digestates also potentially odorous and polluting and undertaken in accordance with guidance to prevent uncontrolled release.

8.4 Highways Authority

No objection, subject to conditions (received 06/10/2025)

- The Transport Statement has demonstrated the proposals for widening the entrance to be able to accommodate HGVs and mid-size vans to be able to pass one another without causing any obstruction on the A30.
- Visibility has been submitted showing the distance required with an unobstructed line of sight in both directions.
- In terms of predicted trip generation, the proposed development could generate over a 7 day period an average of 525 trips travelling eastbound and westbound in the AM peak period (08:00 to 09:00), and an average of 540 trips travelling eastbound and westbound in the PM peak period (17:00 to 18:00) and over the course of a typical 10-hour working day, this equates to circa 3 - 4 HGV arrivals and 3 - 4 HGV departures from the Application Site per hour during these months, the equivalent of 6-8 two way HGV movements an hour.
- A detailed swept path analysis indicates that large vehicles, which will also include refuse vehicles and fire tenders can access and manoeuvre within the proposed site and also the swept path analysis demonstrating ingress and egressing the site from the proposed improved access from the A30.

8.5 Environmental Protection

No objection, subject to conditions (received 07/10/2025)

- It is noted that this activity will require an environmental permit from the Environment Agency, which will require the operator to follow the application process.
- Environmental Protection have no adverse comments in relation to the methodology used or conclusions reached in relation to noise. Suitably worded condition to secure necessary mitigation highlighted in the noise assessment is implemented and maintained.
- Environmental Protection have no adverse comments in relation to the submitted Air Quality / Dust, Odour and Pest Management documents. Suitable conditions should be applied to secure the implementation of suggested mitigation.
- Due to the close vicinity of existing residential dwellings Environmental Protection recommend a condition for a construction method statement to manage any possible adverse effects associated with the initial development. This should include no bonfires, operating times of construction, noise reduction during the build, protection of nearby receptors from dust arising from construction and vehicle movements and storage of waste materials prior to removal from site.

8.6 Tree Officer

Comments (received 22/10/2025 and 16/12/2025)

- The site is located within a large Area Tree Preservation Order (TPO) reference 462-2010 which encompasses the proposal.
- It is noted that some trees have had their crowns raised, although there are no records of existing consents. Any future works would need to be applied for via the Planning Portal.
- No trees are proposed for removal, including those of lower quality which are to be retained for their biodiversity value.
- The extent of incursion into root protection areas of trees is acceptable since the impacted trees mainly follow the access track and are already subjected to compacted ground due to the existing track which has been traversed by farm machinery over a considerable period of time.
- T11 an Ash tree of 'C' quality (low quality) faces the largest incursion but due to its lower quality, condition, and its proximity to the existing track there is no objection.
- The Arboricultural consultant would need to supervise the track upgrade / construction, including taking notes and photographs showing how the trees are being safeguarded.
- Proposed protective fencing is in line with BS5837:2012.
- Tree surgery works suggested within the tree survey can only be carried out subject to planning permission or following an approved Tree Works application.
- Additional detail on utility / service runs has been provided and accepted.
- There are concerns that some of the trees may become under pressure for excessive tree surgery operations or removal as they may be perceived as a nuisance. It should also be noted that this development if approved will ultimately affect the verdant nature of this land and diminish its natural beauty.

8.7 Landscape Officer

Comments (received 04/11/2025 and 16/12/2025)

- The majority of the new development is to be sited within agricultural fields which are currently undeveloped and separate from the existing complex of farm buildings at Wessex Farm.
- The three main digester tanks and the feedstock storage building are the largest built structures and as a result of their height and scale are likely to have the furthest reaching impacts. The flare stack has the potential to add a particularly 'industrial element' to this site which has implications for both the landscape character and visual amenity of this rural area.
- Details of the flare were requested. The applicant has responded that the flare would only be used during maintenance or in an emergency and any flame would be located internally within the flare unit so it would not be visible externally.
- The development would result in adverse landscape and visual impacts. The particularly sensitive views of the site from Castle Hill Public Open Space in Shaftesbury are of greatest concern. However, providing an effective landscape planting scheme can be designed and implemented, in the longer term it would be possible to ensure that the impacts resulting from the development can be limited.
- It would be possible to limit the resulting adverse effects to a level that would not be classed as significant in line with the submitted LVIA methodology.
- Whilst there would remain a degree of landscape and visual harm resulting from the proposals, the longer term adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity would not be significant enough to warrant an objection.
- The suggested colour finishes to the proposals will help to provide some mitigation of their impacts. The main digester tanks would also be set down 2m lower than the immediate surrounding ground level to reduce their overall height.
- Whilst there are concerns about the separation from the existing complex of farm buildings, the new structures would be located within a field that is at a lower ground than the existing farm complex.
- The design and successful implementation of a substantial and appropriate landscape planting scheme will be essential in reducing the impacts of this development to an acceptable level.
- A substantial belt of native deciduous woodland planting to the east of the main development site area will need to be provided in order to reduce the adverse landscape and visual impacts of this development to an acceptable level.
- The new planting belt will need to be at least 10m in width of actual planting area. Any maintenance strip/access should be in addition to this.
- There would be additional benefit if this strip could be widened further, in its southern half. At this end the new planting is directly within the line of site between the Castle Hill viewpoints and the tallest and largest elements of the development proposals.

8.8 Conservation Officer

Comments (received 17/10/2025)

- The proposed scheme has been assessed, in relation to perceived impacts on encompassing heritage assets, considered of special architectural / historical significance, and their associated settings.

- Agree with the adopted methodology, regarding heritage assessment, and conclusion of impact evidenced and justified within the application's supporting Heritage Assessment.
- The scheme's effects on the setting of encompassing heritage assets would not be significant enough to warrant an objection or deviation from a conclusion of less than substantial harm.

8.9 Natural Environment Team

Comments (received 09/01/2026)

- Assessment of impacts on ecological receptors can be relied upon and the proposal is capable of delivering the mandatory 10% BNG on-site.
- The proposed post development BNG includes habitat types of medium and higher distinctiveness, additionally, the development relies upon the delivery of the entire 10% on-site. The BNG is therefore considered as 'on-site significant' and would require managing and monitoring for a period of 30 years detailed within a Habitat Management & Monitoring Plan (HMMP), secured by legal agreement and approved by the authority in order to discharge the statutory BNG pre-commencement condition.
- Mitigation measures within the Ecological Impact Assessment could be secured by condition, along with a pre-commencement condition for the approval of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).
- Due to the assemblage of bat species identified using the site, and the potential for other protected species sensitive to artificial lighting such as Hazel dormice, a condition requiring a lighting scheme to be agreed prior to the scheme being first brought into operation would be required.

8.10 Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs National Landscape

Comments (received 29/10/2025 and 15/12/2025)

- The site appears to be in an extension of the Vale of Wardour landscape character area of the Rolling Clay Vales landscape character type of the National Landscape's landscape character assessment.
- Biodigestors can create huge amounts of traffic, largely tractor and trailer, bringing the 'feedstock' many miles from the fields where it is grown. Not only does that extensive transportation activity militate against the environmental and sustainability credentials of such schemes, but also that traffic has considerable potential both to cause congestion on the narrow roads in the National Landscape and physical damage to and diffuse runoff from the road verges.
- The fields that would be given over to growing the green 'feedstock' for the biodigester would otherwise be growing food.
- Although the development itself would not directly impinge on the designated National Landscape, activities of those using the development and growing the 'feedstock' would impact on both the physical fabric and perceptual qualities of this NL. The proposed energy generation development would, therefore, neither conserve nor enhance natural beauty.

8.11 Flood Risk Management

Comments (13/11/2025, 31/12/2025 and 04/03/2026)

- The site is within Flood Zone 1 for the EA indicative flood maps
- Parts of the site are at risk from surface water flooding (northern and southern boundaries along Fern Brook).
- Negligible risk of emergence of groundwater.
- Flood risk to the site is compatible with the proposed development.
- The submitted surface water drainage strategy has been updated to accord with the latest National standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).
- The Geo-Environmental Site Investigation indicates that infiltration would not be feasible at the site due to the clay-based geology. It is therefore agreed that surface water disposal would need to have a strategy based on discharge to an adjacent watercourse.
- Additional information has been received and demonstrates that the drainage scheme is viable and deliverable, should mitigate flood risk to the site and not create or exacerbate off site worsening.

8.12 Rights of Way

No Comment (received 04/12/2025)

- There would not be a direct impact upon the Rights of Way in the area.

8.13 Dorset Wildlife Trust

No response received

8.14 Health and Safety Executive - Haz. Subst. Consents

Comments (12/11/2025)

- Does not lie within the consultation distance of a major hazard site or major accident hazard pipeline
- No need for further consultation

8.15 SGN (Southern Gas Networks)

Comments (12/11/2025)

- Map shows the location of the SGN gas main.
- Standard advice that relates to development not linked to the gas network itself.

8.16 Gillingham Ward – Councillor Potheary

Comment (received 15/10/2025)

- Wide public concern in relation to the application.
- Planning Committee should determine the application if officers are minded to approve it.

8.17 Motcombe Parish Council

Objection (received 15/10/2025 and 13/11/2025)

- Increased traffic impact on surrounding network of narrow country lanes and minor junctions; visibility of junctions at Wessex Farm; safety of pedestrians, cyclists and farm traffic; congestion and road surface deterioration.

- Prolonged hours of activity, vehicle movements, reversing alarms – reduce tranquillity of the area to local residents; insufficient evidence that odour would be managed; material harm to air quality and neighbouring amenity – noise, odour, emissions.
- Built form and operational activity of industrial estate scale in a rural location – harm to character and appearance of the area; erode open and tranquil qualities of the countryside – views and setting of heritage assets; inadequate weight given to protecting local landscape character.
- Disturbance / loss of local wildlife habitats due to scale, operational noise, lighting and traffic; exacerbate flood risk, pollution of surface water and downstream impacts.
- Impacts on local amenity.

8.18 Shaftesbury Town Council

Objection (received 08/10/2025)

- Surprised they were not consulted earlier in the development process.
- Lack of a noise impact assessment on residents of the northern slopes of Shaftesbury.
- No information on the volume or nature of HGV traffic although there is mention of seasonal increases. Any traffic coming from Shaftesbury and A350 will go through residential areas.
- No consideration given to the possible impact of odour from the proposed plant on residents of the northern slopes and the impact on residents on traffic routes to the proposed plant from the waste lorries delivering to the plant.
- There is no detail of a tree planting scheme to conceal the site from local residents.
- Visual impact from Castle Hill.

8.19 Gillingham Town Council

Objection (received 14/10/2025)

- Whilst the council supports the principle of anaerobic digesters as a means of generating renewable energy, managing farm waste, and contributing to sustainable rural economies, the current development is not in a suitable location.
- The site falls within the Gillingham Royal Forest Project Area and the Blackmore Vale Landscape Character Area - both identified in local policy as sensitive and valued for their scenic, cultural, and historic importance.
- Contravenes Saved Policy GRF1 of the North Dorset Local Plan, which seeks to protect and enhance the Royal Forest's distinctive landscape.
- The introduction of large buildings and increased HGV traffic would urbanise a rural landscape, in contradiction of Policy 4 (Natural Environment) of the North Dorset Local Plan.
- Adverse effect on:
 - Castle Hill, Shaftesbury (Scheduled Monument)
 - Gillingham Park Boundary (Scheduled Monument)
 - Shaftesbury Conservation Area
- NPPF Paragraph 208 requires great weight for heritage conservation; harm not justified by energy benefits.
- Conflict with Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan - Plan prioritises protecting elevated visual setting and rural approaches.
- Noise, odour, and light pollution in a tranquil setting.

- Increased HGV movements - highway safety and residential disturbance.
- Biodiversity loss, contrary to NPPF Paragraph 186 and Local Plan Policy 4 (net gain for biodiversity required).

8.20 Representations received

There have been 73 representations objecting to the application and 1 letter of support. A petition from local residents has also been submitted with 61 signatures. The main concerns raised in the objections relate to:

- Increased HGV, traffic and road safety
- Unsuitable location - scale and appearance of the buildings out of keeping of the rural landscape and National Landscape
- Industrial scale facility
- Loss of agricultural land
- Noise, odour, pests and air emissions
- Contamination / water pollution from runoff from the site
- Harm to neighbouring amenity
- Impacts upon wildlife, protected trees
- Light pollution and impact from the flare in dark skies
- Impact upon heritage assets, such as Castle Hill, with negligible public benefit
- Local homes would not benefit from energy being generated
- The site is within the Gillingham Royal Forest
- Site selection, need for the site and long-term viability
- Well being and health of residents
- Demands on local infrastructure
- Limited employment and impact on tourism
- Lack of consultation

9. **Duties**

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that when considering whether to grant planning permission for a development which affects a listed building or its setting, there is a general duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 9.3 Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.
- 9.4 Section 85 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) when making any decision which affects such land.

10. **Relevant policies**

10.1 Development plan

In this case the development plan comprises:

Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan 2019

Policy 1 – Sustainable waste management

Policy 4 – Applications for waste management facilities not allocated in the Waste Plan

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 of facilities

Policy 16 – Natural resources

Policy 17 – Flood risk

Policy 18 – Biodiversity and geological interest

Policy 19 – Historic environment

North Dorset Local Plan (January 2016)

Policy 1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy 3 – Climate Change

Policy 4 – The Natural Environment

Policy 5 – The Historic Environment

Policy 22 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

Policy 24 - Design

Policy 25 – Amenity

Motcombe Neighbourhood Plan (December 2019)

Policy MOT 5 - Woodlands

Policy MOT 6 – Protecting and Enhancing Local Biodiversity

Policy MOT 7 – Local Views

Policy MOT 8 – Dark Skies

10.2 Material considerations

Emerging local plans:

Paragraph 49 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).

The Dorset Council Local Plan

The Dorset Council Local Plan Options consultation took place between January and March 2021, with further consultation between 18 Aug – 31 October 2025. Being at a very early stage of preparation, the relevant policies in the draft plan should be accorded very limited weight in decision making.

National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (as amended 2025)

Paragraph 11 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. 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 specific NPPF policies protecting areas or assets provide a strong reason for refusal and/or any adverse impacts of approval would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF as a whole, with particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well designed places and providing affordable homes.

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) and Ground conditions and pollution (paragraphs 198 and 201)

National Planning Policy for Waste (2014)

Consider the likely impact on the local environment and on amenity in terms of:

- Protection of water quality and resources and flood risk management
- Land instability
- Landscape and visual impacts
- Nature conservation
- Conserving the historic environment
- Traffic and access
- Air emissions, including dust
- Odours
- Vermin and birds
- Noise, light and vibration
- Litter
- Potential land use conflict

Ensure facilities are well-designed.

Be concerned with implementing the planning strategy in the Local Plan and not with the control of processes which are a matter for the pollution control authorities. Waste planning authorities should work on the assumption that the relevant pollution control regime will be properly applied and enforced.

10.3 Other material considerations

- North Dorset District Council “Landscape Character Area Assessment” - Evidence Base, March 2008 and ‘Addendum’ dated July 2008.
- Dorset Council Landscape Character Assessment Map
- Cranborne Chase National Landscape Partnership Plan 2025-2030
- Noise Policy Statement for England 2010
- 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.

EIA Development

- 10.4 A screening opinion (P/ESC/2025/05974) has been undertaken by Dorset Council (as the relevant competent authority). The proposal does not fit neatly into the Schedule 2 categories, as agricultural byproducts/waste would be converted by anaerobic digestion to produce biogas. In addition to farm waste (slurry and manure), a significant input includes byproducts of crop silage and straw. EIA guidance states that regardless of whether the proposal falls neatly into the listed categories, they can provide a broad indication of the type or scale of development which is likely to require an assessment. The threshold for paragraph 3(b) Industrial installations for carrying gas, steam and hot water development to qualify as Schedule 2 development is: The area of works exceeds 1 hectare and the threshold for paragraph 11(b) Installations for the disposal of waste development to qualify as Schedule 2 development is: (i) The disposal is by incineration; (ii) or the area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectare; (iii) or the installation is to be sited within 100 metres of any controlled waters.
- 10.5 Therefore, at approximately 6ha, the proposal exceeds the size thresholds for screening. The site is also bound by ordinary watercourses to the north and south and is therefore within 100 metres of controlled waters. Key issues that were considered were the scale of the development and the nature of the potential impact in terms of discharges, emissions or odour. Other issues included landscape concerns, traffic, other nuisance (noise, pest control) and the potential for significant impacts on human health and risk of accidents, and nuisance for nearby receptors.
- 10.6 There is no indicative threshold for 3(b), however at approximately 6ha, the proposal significantly exceeds the size threshold for screening (1ha) and the red line boundary includes a significant operational area. The schedule 2 threshold for 11(b) is also exceeded as this states (ii) the area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectare and (iii) the installation is to be sited within 100 metres of any controlled waters. The indicative threshold for 11(b) is “Installations (including landfill sites) for the deposit, recovery and/or disposal of household, industrial and/or commercial wastes where new capacity is created to hold more than 50,000 tonnes per year, or to hold waste on a site of 10 hectares or more. Sites taking smaller quantities of these wastes, sites seeking only to accept inert wastes (demolition rubble etc.) or Civic Amenity sites, are unlikely to require Environmental Impact Assessment”. The site is proposing 97,000 tonnes of maximum annual operational through-put (feedstock capacity), therefore this is significantly larger than the indicative threshold, which means EIA is more likely to be required. The impact of the proposed new infrastructure (the height of the digesters will be 14m/12m height

above ground) was considered in comparison to existing buildings in the vicinity, together with visible emissions, noting that the use of the standby flare stack would be limited. However, guidance states it should not be presumed that development above the indicative thresholds should always be subject to assessment and each development should be considered on its merits.

- 10.7 Following consideration of the relevant selection criteria for screening Schedule 2 development presented in Schedule 3 of the EIA regulations, the Planning Authority concluded that the proposed development is unlikely to result in significant environmental impacts. Therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred on it by Regulation 6(6) of the EIA Regulations and based on the information submitted, the Waste Planning Authority adopted an EIA screening opinion on 6 November 2025 that the current proposal is not EIA development.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

- 10.8 The application site is approximately 4.2 kilometres from Fontmell and Melbury Downs Special Area of Conservation, which is a European designated site. 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.
- 10.9 Potential HRA pathways for Fontmell and Melbury Downs are air quality. However, the waste materials and products from anaerobic digestion would be stored securely and would remain covered. In addition, the anaerobic digestion process would be a sealed system. Therefore, the proposal should not result in appreciable emissions to air. There would also be significant separation distance from this protected site. The tributaries of Fern Brook that are adjacent to the site are within the water catchment of the River Stour. Water quality associated with the Somerset Levels Ramsar site would not be affected by the proposal.
- 10.10 The Council have assessed that proposal would be unlikely to have significant effect on European sites. Further Habitat Regulations Assessment, in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), would not be necessary.

11. 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.

12. Public Sector Equalities Duty

- 10.11 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; and
- encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where participation is disproportionately low.

10.12 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. There is no known impact on persons with protected characteristics.

13. Financial benefits

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

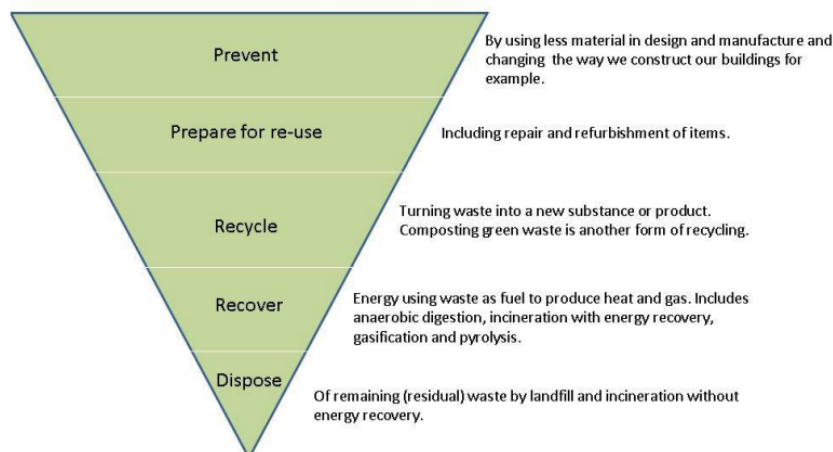
14. Planning Assessment

Principle of development

10.14 The Waste Planning Authority takes a positive approach that reflects a presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposal needs to demonstrate that it supports the delivery of the Waste Hierarchy, enables Dorset to move towards net self-sufficiency and adheres to the proximity principle.

10.15

The Waste Hierarchy



10.16 Anaerobic digestion is considered to be recovery since it produces energy. The proposal at Wessex Farm would produce biogas, which would be cleaned to result in biomethane, and electricity to be used by the AD facility. The liquid and solid digestates would also recover valuable nutrients that would be spread on agricultural land at Wessex Farm and other sites.

10.17 The Waste Plan (2019) states ‘there is an identified need for recovery facilities in order to manage arisings of non-recyclable waste’. It expects anaerobic digestion facilities to be generally located in rural areas and within an agricultural setting due to the opportunity to

use the digestate on farmland. Paragraph 161 of the NPPF states that the planning system should support renewable and low carbon energy. Paragraph 168 states that applicants should not be required to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and 'give significant weight to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation and the proposal's contribution to a net zero future'.

- 10.18 The anaerobic digestion process in this proposal would manage organic waste. These wastes would include cereal bin ends / husks, cattle slurry, poultry manure, separated slurry (pig and cattle), farmyard manure and fruit / vegetable waste and brewing products. There are nine identified needs within the Waste Plan. Whilst these agricultural organic waste types do not fit specifically into the needs, the facility would provide for the waste treatment and energy recovery of wastes produced by farms locally, and therefore it would address some local waste needs. More generally, in a national context, there is a need for the biogas that the facility would produce.
- 10.19 The Waste Plan does not allocate specific sites for anaerobic digestion, although sites are required to support the delivery of the Spatial Strategy through 6(a). The application site has been selected due to its accessibility to the highway network, on-site co-location to gas infrastructure with network capacity and a viable connection and proximity to an existing source of agricultural feedstock sources. In accordance with Policy 6(f), the proposal would be a significant distance from European and Ramsar sites. Policy 6(b) is not relevant. In line with Policy 6(c), the crop feedstocks would be stored in outdoor clamps which would be covered and other feedstocks would be delivered to an enclosed storage building. Odours would be managed and are discussed in further detail below. In accordance with Policy 6(d) and (e), the AD Facility would primarily produce gas that would be injected directly into the gas grid. Based upon 97,000 tonnes of feedstock, this is anticipated to be 9.9 million cubic metres of biomethane per annum. There would also be some electricity generated for use at the site, anticipated to deliver 500kW.
- 10.20 Subject to other planning matters considered below, the proposal be acceptable in principle and would comply with Policies 1 and 22 of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016), Policies 1 and 6 of the Waste Plan (2019) and Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (amended 2025).

Design

- 10.21 The operational area of the proposed Anaerobic Digester Plant would include numerous buildings, plant and equipment which would support the operation. The Feedstock Storage Building and the three digester tanks would be the most visible buildings within the landscape in terms of their scale, height and bulk. These buildings would be positioned on excavated ground set 2 metres below existing ground levels to reduce their overall height. Use of landscaping and the colour of building materials would also mitigate against their appearance in the medium to long term and is discussed in more detail below.
- 10.22 The feedstock clamps and liquid digestate lagoon would also have significant scale in terms of their footprint.
- 10.23 The walls of the clamps would be up to 4.2 metres high. The feedstock would be covered by a retractable geotextile material and the colour of this could be secured by condition.
- 10.24 The liquid digestate storage lagoon would have a maximum capacity of 9000 tonnes and would accommodate the 120 tonnes per day liquid generation from the AD Facility. Liquid

digestate would be pumped from the anaerobic digesters to the storage lagoon through sealed pipeline. The lagoon would be lined by a double lined High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) base layer with provision for leak detection. It would be covered with an anchored, sealed floating membrane system with technology to capture any further gaseous emission. These details could be secured by condition.

- 10.25 Other plant and equipment would be modest in scale with varying dimensions and generally of low height, with features of no greater height than the main buildings. These plant and equipment would be located in proximity to the digester tanks and in a group positioned to the south of the operative area. The flare unit would be positioned approximately 19.5 metres from other equipment near the access driveway. The rest of the operative part of the site to the west would be used for habitat (species rich grassland) and surface water ponds.
- 10.26 The proposed development would have large scale buildings and structures with an industrial character. These would be separated from the existing complex of farm buildings at Wessex Farm to the north. However, the proposal would be located within a field at a lower ground level than the existing farm complex. Use of appropriate colour finishes and landscaping would be key to mitigating against the proposal's impacts on the character of the area and could be secured by condition. Subject to their agreement, the proposal would be in accordance with Policy 24 of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016) and Policy 14 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

Landscape

- 10.27 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken. Site visits were conducted both during late summer when vegetation was in leaf and in winter when trees were not in leaf.
- 10.28 The LVIA identifies that the site, and lower lying land to the west of Shaftesbury, lies within the North Blackmore Rolling Vales (Area 7). The land to the east of Area 7 is the 'Shaftesbury Greensand Ridges' (Area 23) and to the north, west and south is the 'Blackmore Vale' (Area 15), as defined by the North Dorset District Council Landscape Character Area Assessment and Addendum. These Landscape Character Areas have been combined into the 'Rolling Vales' landscape type within the Dorset Landscape Character Assessment Map, as shown on the Council's website.
- 10.29 The site is within the open countryside but not located within the National Landscape or a historic park and gardens designation. It does not adjoin any important wildlife / heritage sites or areas of ancient woodland. The LVIA assesses the landscape context of the site as reflecting 'its rural countryside location comprising a patchwork of medium to large irregular shaped, predominately fields enclosed by tall hedgerows, and belts of trees occupying undulating topography and lower areas within the River Stour valley with the settlement of Shaftesbury occupying part of the ridge to the east with Gillingham occupying lower lying land either side of the River Stour and River Loddon valleys to the north west.'
- 10.30 The likely Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) of the proposal is indicated to be very limited to the north, west and south due to gently rolling topography and extent of tree cover. To the north east, east and south west, the ZTV would extend to areas of higher ground at Duncliffe Hill and Shaftesbury ridgeline. Views of the site from Duncliffe Hill are screened

due to the density and extent of trees on the hill, much of which is within an Ancient Woodland designation.

10.31 Key viewpoints identified in the assessment include:

- near distance views from A30 / Sherborne Causeway opposite the Site entrance and entrance to Wessex Farm, 380 metres from main Site looking north;
- near distance views from Public Footpath No. N69/9 looking east and south east;
- near distance views from B3081 / Shaftesbury Road looking south;
- middle distance views from Public Footpath No. N69/9 and Motcombe Turnpike Showground looking south;
- middle distance views from Calves Lane looking west;
- middle to long distance views from short section of Lox Lane looking east;
- long distance views from sections of Public Footpath No. N1/36 and Breach Common looking north west;
- very long distance views from Castle Hill open space and Public Footpath No. N1/27 looking north west;
- very long distance views from Public Footpath No. N1/31 and Public Footpath No. N69/13 within Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs NL looking westwards.

10.32 The LVIA assessed that ‘the majority of views of the application site contribute in a limited way to the local landscape and agricultural countryside character of the area as it is one of many open and enclosed fields in the landscape’. The application site was assessed as having a Moderate / Ordinary value in the context of the wider character area or landscape context.

10.33 The proposed landscape features that have been included in the Landscape Strategy Plan:

- retention of the existing framework of hedgerows and trees on the boundaries of the site;
- retention of parts of the south western portion of the operational part of the application site for landscape and biodiversity enhancement;
- introduction of additional tree and shrub planting along the southern boundary of the operational part of the application site to improve the brookside habitats;
- the introduction of additional tree and shrub planting along the eastern boundary of the application site to strengthen the site boundary, provided screening in views from Castle Hill and Calves Lane;
- introduction of a new hedgerow and tree planting along the western side of the proposed access route to the AD facility and provide a belt of tree planting along the A30; and
- the use of ‘green’ colour to the main structures (digesters / feedstock buildings).

10.34 The impact of the proposal was assessed in the LVIA on a number of landscape elements, landscape patterns and wider landscape character. The landscape effects for each of these aspects have been assessed at Day 1 / completion of construction when the coverage and extent of the new facility would be most apparent and then by year 15 when the growth of tree planting would reduce the overall effects. The assessment is summarised in the table below.

Landscape Effect	Day 1 / Completion of Construction	Year 15
Landscape Elements	Moderate / Substantial to Moderate	Moderate / Slight to Negligible / Slight
Landscape Patterns / Site Character	Moderate / Slight	Slight
Wider Landscape Character	Moderate / Slight to Negligible	Slight to Negligible

10.35 The visual assessment of the proposal used the same viewpoints as the landscape assessment and listed above. Visual receptors were identified as:

- Vehicle travellers, horse riders, pedestrians and cyclists on the local road network immediately adjoining the Site, including the A30 / Sherborne Causeway, B3081 / Shaftesbury Road, Calves Lane and Lox Lane;
- Pedestrian users on sections of Public Footpath N69/9 to the west and north west, short sections of Public Footpath N1/36 on Breach Common, a short section of Public Footpath N1/27 and Castle Hill open space and short sections of Public Footpath N1/31 and Public Footpath N69/13 within Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs National Landscape;
- Users and visitors to Motcombe Turnpike Showground, parts of Breach Common and Castle Hill open space within Shaftesbury; and
- Residential properties to the south, north west, north and east.

10.36 Assessment by the LVIA of the predicted visual effects concluded that the majority of impacts would not be significant. However, there would be some localised visual effects during the construction period and at Day 1 of operation. This is mainly in views from a short section of the A30 Sherborne Causeway at the farm entrance and sections of Public Footpath No. N69/9 to the west. There would also be localised visual effects in views from Castle Hill open space due to the very high sensitivity of this elevated viewpoint. However, in the longer term (Year 15), the proposed mitigation measures within the Landscape Strategy Plan would ensure that the effects of the proposal would be reduced and the development would 'blend in' and assimilate into the landscape.

10.37 The Council's Landscape Officer accepts that the proposal would initially result in adverse landscape and visual impacts, in particular from sensitive views at Castle Hill Public Open Space in Shaftesbury. However, subject to the agreement of an effective landscape planting scheme, the longer term impacts of the proposal could be limited to a level that would not be classed as significant. The landscape planting scheme could be secured by condition and would need to include details such as a strong planting scheme of native deciduous woodland to the east of the operational area.

10.38 Whilst there would be a degree of landscape and visual harm resulting from the proposal initially, the longer-term adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity would not be significant. Whilst the proposal would not preserve or enhance the landscape in the short-term, this would be mitigated by additional planting to comply with Policy 24 of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016) and Policy 14 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019) in the longer-term.

National Landscape

- 10.39 The application site is 2.1 km west of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). The submitted LVIA identifies public footpaths N1/31 and N69/13 as vantage points from within the National Landscape and contribute to outward views. These visual receptors were assessed to have high value. The predicted visual effects of the proposal on the National Landscape was assessed to have moderate adverse effects during construction, moderate to moderate / slight at Day 1 of the operation and moderate / slight adverse effects at Year 15. Given the separation distance, the National Landscape Officer accepts that the proposal would not directly impinge on the designated National Landscape.
- 10.40 The National Landscape Officer raised concerns about traffic generation from the proposal using tractor and trailers through the narrow roads within the National Landscape and using fields to grow crop feedstock rather than food. The traffic generation and feedstock sourcing are discussed in greater detail below. It is noted, however, that feedstock would be sourced within a 15 mile radius of the application site and this would include areas outside the National Landscape. The submission emphasises that agricultural land within the National Landscape is already growing crops in any case and the proposal would provide a new destination for farmers' existing or similar products. Feedstock crops would be grown in rotation with food crops so agricultural land both within and outside the National Landscape would remain in production.
- 10.41 Whilst the National Landscape Officer has raised concern about the proposal, taking into consideration the separation distance from the National Landscape, provision of an effective landscape planting scheme and the accepted increase in vehicle movements generated by the development, it is considered that the proposal would not harm the National Landscape in the longer-term, and would comply with Policy 24 of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016) and Policy 14 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

Highways

- 10.42 Assessment of Personal Injury Collision Data has not identified any collisions in the immediate vicinity of the application site access and there are no trends in collisions on the local highway network. Therefore, the Transport Statement states that there are 'no existing road safety concerns on the A30 at the existing access to Wessex Farm or in the vicinity of the site'.
- 10.43 The construction phase is anticipated to last up to 18 months. The majority of daily vehicle movements would be undertaken by construction workers in light vehicles. If it is assumed all workers would travel independently, this would generate up to 60 (30 in, 30 out) light vehicle movements daily. Up to 40 (20 in, 20 out) HGV deliveries are also anticipated daily. As such, the construction phase would generate up to 100 (50 in, 50 out) daily vehicle movements. The Transport Statement concludes that construction traffic would not have an adverse impact on the local highway network.
- 10.44 A Construction Traffic Management Plan has also been submitted to support the application. This provides details on the traffic mitigation including compliance to the delivery route, requiring a booking system with monitoring, provision of signage, wheel cleaning and other measures.

- 10.45 97,000 tonnes of feedstock is proposed to be imported to the AD Facility each year. 76,781 tonnes of solid and liquid digestate are also proposed to be exported from the site each year. The operational phase of the proposal would generate traffic that would vary over an annual period. This is due to the site receiving crop feedstock at harvest times in June, July and September. Non-harvest periods would have significantly lower HGV movements which are shown in the table below.
- 10.46 The Transport Statement emphasises that the HGV movements already exist on the local highway network since they relate to crop or waste feedstock that would have previously been taken to alternative sites. Tractor movements on the local highway network generated by Wessex Farm itself would also be reduced since feedstock and wastes would be transferred on-site to the AD Facility. Notwithstanding this, the number of vehicle movements at the access needs to be considered for this new development.
- 10.47 Appendix H of the Transport Statement provides a breakdown of the indicative feedstock imports, their proposed maximum annual tonnage and the types of vehicles they would be delivered in. The majority of feedstock would be delivered evenly throughout the year, with 4000 tonnes for whole crop being delivered from off site during the harvest period. The vehicles proposed to be used range from tractor and trailer / tanker with 12 tonne capacity to 28 tonne HGV. The majority of the proposed feedstock (70,000 tonnes) would be delivered in HGV over 20 tonnes in load capacity.
- 10.48 Vehicle movements have been calculated for 20 working days in a typical month. The rate of deliveries would vary between harvest (June, July and September) and non-harvest periods. Vehicle movements have been calculated at 69 (35 in, 35 out) movements per day on the local highway network during the harvest months and 32 (16 in, 16 out) movements per day during other months. This takes into account deliveries for feedstock and exports of digestate. It also reduces the total daily movements by 9 two-way trips to account for co-location with Wessex Farm.

Period	Total Anticipated Daily Movements		Total	Less Synergy from Co-location	Net Daily Movements
	Feedstock	Digestate			
Non-Harvest Months	28	12	41	-9	32
Harvest Months	65	12	78	-9	69

- 10.49 Over the course of a typical 10-hour working day during the harvest months, this would result in approximately up to 8 (4 in, 4 out) movements an hour. During the remaining 9 months of the year, there would be approximately up to 4 (2 in, 2 out) movements an hour during a typical 10-hour working day.
- 10.50 A 7-day speed survey of vehicles travelling along the A30 was undertaken in April 2023. Two Automatic Traffic Counters (ATC) were positioned approximately 200 metres on either side of the existing site access. These recorded 525 two-way trips for all vehicles travelling along the A30 during the AM Peak period and 540 two-way vehicle trips during the PM Peak period.

- 10.51 When considering the additional daily movements which would be generated by the proposal during harvest months, there would be approximately 1.31% increase to the existing AM peak hour traffic and 1.28% increase to the existing PM peak hour traffic. The remaining nine months of the year would result in 0.61% increase to the AM peak period and 0.59% increase to the PM peak period. The Highway Authority has no objection to these increases.
- 10.52 The existing access junction is proposed to be widened to accommodate existing and proposed HGV movements between the site and A30. Swept path analysis demonstrates that the proposed access could accommodate the turning and passing manoeuvre of an HGV and large van travelling in either direction at the access. Swept path analysis has also been provided for HGVs at the entrance. Whilst this shows that the proposed access would not allow for the clear simultaneous passage of two HGVs at the access, the incursion is minor and accepted by the Highway Authority. Visibility has been submitted showing the distance required with an unobstructed line of sight in both directions.
- 10.53 A new access to the AD Facility is proposed to ensure that vehicle movements associated with the proposal do not route too closely to existing residential dwellings adjacent to Wessex Farm. A new on-site priority junction would provide dedicated access to the existing residential dwellings via the existing internal road. A second new on-site priority junction would be constructed approximately 85 metres to the north to provide direct access to the existing farmyard. The section of existing access between the farmyard and the dwellings would be stopped up to ensure HGV would use the new access and improve road safety for existing residents.
- 10.54 To the north of the farmyard access, the road would narrow to approximately 5 metres in width and there would be several waiting areas to allow two HGVs to pass each other in opposite directions. The route would then revert to the existing access to the north of the farmyard, although it would be widened to 5 metres in places and would be realigned to avoid root protection areas.
- 10.55 Turning areas would be provided within the main operational part of the site to ensure all vehicles could enter and leave the site in forward gear. Swept path analysis has been provided to demonstrate adequate passing of vehicles and on site turning.
- 10.56 Five parking spaces are proposed for the four full time equivalent staff to be based at the application site and occasional visitors. Space would also be available to accommodate a minimum of five HGVs or tractors and trailers in circumstances where they would be required to wait to unload or load at the site. The Transport Statement anticipates that vehicles would be on site for approximately 15 minutes to enter, unload / load and leave. Whilst HGV movements could be managed to avoid use of the trailer bays, during peak periods such as harvest time, additional waiting may be required and two overflow waiting spaces are provided along the access route to accommodate this. These site features could be secured through condition.
- 10.57 The submitted Pollution Control Statement identifies that a wheel wash facility would be provided within the site to remove the potential build-up of feedstock materials on vehicle wheels before they leave the operational area and traverse the access road to exit onto the public highway. Feedstock suppliers would be contractually required to maintain

delivery vehicles in a clean state. Site management would have procedures in place to enforce clean vehicles and manage deposits on the highway if they do occur.

- 10.58 The accepted increased vehicle movements along the A30, improved road safety resulting from the widening of the entrance and the new access road through the application site would be in accordance with Policies 13 and 23 of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016) and Policy 12 of the Waste Plan (2019).

Feedstock Sourcing and Digestate Export

- 10.59 The applicant has stated that sourcing for harvested feedstock and 'cut and made' silage would be sought through contract farming within a 15-mile radius of the application site. Agricultural wastes would also be sought from within a 15-mile radius, however, may necessarily be sourced from further afield. Notwithstanding this, there would be functional efficiency and viability considerations which would incentivise sourcing feedstocks as close to the AD Facility as possible. OFGEM also have a Green Gas Support Scheme which needs to demonstrate life cycle greenhouse gas emissions. These include travel distances for feedstock supplies and vehicle fuel types.
- 10.60 Co-location is proposed between the AD Facility and Wessex Farm. It is intended for the farm to grow 3,000 tonnes of maize or whole crop cereals silage. 3,000 tonnes of liquid digestate would also be used on the farm as growing fertiliser. The existing agricultural products haulage business at Wessex Farm is also intended to supply 20,000 tonnes of straw annually that would be collected from external stores. 14,000 tonnes of straw is already collected by the business and the increase to 20,000 tonnes would be accommodated by reducing collection of other agricultural products.
- 10.61 The haulage business would also provide 5,000 tonnes of poultry manure from nearby farms, which is an existing arrangement, plus an additional 5,000 tonnes from other farm locations supplying waste feedstock would endeavour to be within the 15-mile radius.
- 10.62 Liquid and solid digestate would be primarily used on agricultural land where feedstock has been supplied from. This would optimise the contribution of the AD Facility to a local circular economy and support Policy 22 of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016) and Policy 1 of the Waste Plan (2019).

Ecology

- 10.63 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been undertaken and consisted of a desk study of protected species and habitats in the area and a site visit. Further surveys included hedgerow species composition, dormouse, bat activity, Preliminary Roost Assessment and Great Crested Newts. The results are found within the submitted Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA).
- 10.64 A 2km radius zone of influence from the proposal was used within the EclA. Breach Fields Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is 1.1km to the south east. Fontmell and Melbury Down Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is outside the zone of influence and is 4.55km to the south east. Eleven non-statutory designations were identified within 2 km of the Site, consisting of Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). The nearest Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) and Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) are 1.5 km southwest at Dunccliffe Hill.

- 10.65 The application site predominantly consists of one arable field that has been recorded as sown with perennial ryegrass and maize crop. There are five hedgerows which border the site. Two of these were surveyed to be species rich and the other three are close to being species rich. There are early mature and mature trees along the hedgerows which are mainly pedunculate Oak. There is one pond alongside one of the hedgerows, however, this was dry at the time of survey. There is another pond to the east of the application site. Fern Brook has two tributaries which run along the north and south boundaries of the proposed operational area.
- 10.66 Bats, dormice and hedgehogs were identified as requiring further assessment. Badger, water vole, otters, brown hare and polecat, breeding birds, reptiles were scoped out of further assessment due to no signs of them using the site or unsuitable habitat. Numerous bird species have been recorded within the search area. Nesting birds would require standard impact avoidance measures, as found in the mitigation outlined below. The pond to the east of the application site was tested for Great Crested Newt but environmental DNA testing returned a negative result.
- 10.67 Potential impacts and ecological effects were identified for the following features and species:
- whilst no hedgerows would be removed, damage during construction and long-term deterioration through increased shading, improper management, soil compaction may lead to potential effects could be significantly adverse at the local level;
 - potential pollution during construction on adjacent waterways in the absence of mitigation;
 - artificial light may affect the ability of bats to use retained habitat features and have negative effects, significant at the local level;
 - no dormice were surveyed on the site, however, there is the potential for them to colonise hedgerows in the future. No hedgerows are proposed to be removed but potential colonisation could be disrupted during construction phase with short term temporary negative effect, significant at the local level;
 - hedgehog movement and foraging ability could be affected by the construction phase activities and have the potential to inadvertently injure or kill hedgehogs. These predicted effects may result in a short-term negative effect on the local hedgehog population, significant at the local level;
 - low risk of the killing or injury of reptiles during site works. Such an impact would not be anticipated to be significant, in conservation terms, at the local level. However, reptiles are legally protected; and
 - construction of the proposed development could result in the fragmentation of a meta-population of great crested newts through isolation of the proposed on-site ponds with other ponds in the wider locality, and the killing and injury of individuals.
- 10.68 In response to these impacts, the proposal has been designed to incorporate mitigation that would benefit ecology. Measures include:
- provision of a neutral grassland meadow, which would increase suitable foraging and habitats for hedgehogs, reptiles;
 - new hedgerows planted along the new access track to increase connectivity of existing hedgerows and foraging opportunities for bats and birds;

- enhancing existing hedgerows by filling in existing gaps with suitable tree species for species such as dormouse;
- buffer established with the adjacent tributaries to prevent damage during construction;
- new ponds proposed to increase this habitat type in the locality, provide a food source for bats and enable colonisation by great crested newts;
- undertake maintenance of suitable nesting habitat outside the nesting season or have areas checked by a suitably qualified Ecologist;
- management and maintenance of new and existing planting would be detailed within a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP);
- Submission of a sensitive lighting strategy;
- Planting of hazel trees and honeysuckle to enhance habitat for dormouse;
- Gaps in the base of fences to create corridors for hedgehogs;
- construction-phase precautionary measure in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for hedgehogs.
- vegetation clearance to be supervised by an Ecologist if within the reptile active season;
- provision of hibernacula; and
- management of habitat for GCN to be set out in the LEMP.

10.69 Ecological enhancements are also proposed for the proposal. These would include:

- planting of new woodland blocks on the eastern and southern boundaries for bat and bird foraging opportunities and shelter for reptiles and amphibians;
- including plant species with known wildlife value;
- ten bat boxes to be erected on mature trees on the application site;
- creation and ongoing management of five log piles for reptiles within boundary vegetation; and
- twenty bird nesting boxes on mature trees.

10.70 With the implementation of precautionary measures and proposed mitigation, it is considered that the development would not result in any significant residual negative effects on important ecological features such as great crested newts, dormice and bats or any other protected species. These mitigation and enhancement measures could be secured by condition, along with the submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP), Lighting Strategy and Great Crested Newt Mitigation Strategy.

10.71 The proposal has the potential to deliver net benefits for wildlife in the form of additional habitats, with the opportunity to provide additional biodiversity enhancement measures alongside the new development and would be in accordance with Policy 4 of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016), Policy 18 of the Waste Plan (2019) and Chapter 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (amended 2025).

Biodiversity Net Gain

10.72 Assessment of impacts on ecological receptors can be relied upon and the proposal is capable of delivering the mandatory 10% BNG on-site.

10.73 The existing site includes baseline habitats of maize crop on the arable land and a number of hedgerows which consist of species-rich native and native hedgerows. There are also two watercourses to the north and south of the application site.

- 10.74 The proposed post development BNG includes habitat types of medium and higher distinctiveness. These would include four new habitats to be created on the existing arable land and consisting of neutral grassland, non-priority ponds, hedgerows and broadleaved woodland. The proposed species-rich hedgerows would be planted along the new access road to the operational area to improve connectivity with corridors for bats between the site and other hedgerows and woodland. The BNG Metric demonstrates that 79.38% BNG for habitats and 179.41% BNG for hedgerows could be achieved on-site.
- 10.75 Additional watercourse information demonstrates that 15.14% biodiversity net gain for watercourses could be achieved on-site.
- 10.76 Therefore, the development relies upon the delivery of the entire 10% on-site. For these reasons, the BNG is considered as 'on-site significant' and would require managing and monitoring for a period of 30 years detailed within a Habitat Management & Monitoring Plan (HMMP), secured by legal agreement and approved by the authority in order to discharge the statutory BNG pre-commencement condition. Subject to agreement, the proposal would be in accordance with Policy 4 of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016) and Policy 18 of the Waste Plan (2019).

Protected Trees

- 10.77 The application site is covered by a group area Tree Preservation Order 462-2010. This incorporates an area which is bounded by the A30 Sherborne Causeway to the south, Lox Lane to the west, B3081 Shaftesbury Road to the north and Calves Lane to the east. Arboricultural information has been submitted with the application. A total of 64 trees, 4 hedges and 2 groups of trees were recorded in the tree survey. The applicant's Arboriculturalist has graded them as follows:

Grade	Individual Trees	Hedges	Groups of Trees
A (high quality & value – worthy of retention and high level of protection)	3	-	-
B (moderate quality and value – worthy of retention and protection)	31	1	-
C (low quality and value – should only be retained and protected if they are not a constraint to development)	23	2	1
U (require removal for reasonable Arboricultural management)	7	-	1
Ungraded	-	1	-

- 10.78 No individual trees are proposed to be removed. G2 Common Ash is a group of Ash which are showing Ash Die Back due to waterlogged roots and are proposed to be removed. T26 – T32 are dead, or likely to be dead, however they are not proposed to be removed due to their biodiversity value. There are also some tree works proposed on several trees.
- 10.79 The Council's Tree Officer accepts the extent of incursion into root protection areas of trees since the impacted trees mainly follow the existing access track. These are already subjected to compacted ground that has been traversed by farm machinery over a considerable period of time. T11 an Ash tree of 'C' quality (low quality) faces the largest incursion but due to its lower quality and condition, and its proximity to the existing track, there is no objection.
- 10.80 The proposed tree protection fencing would be in accordance with BS5837:2012 and is considered acceptable. Utility / service runs would be laid beneath the proposed access road that mostly follows the alignment of the existing track. Additional information that has

been supplied by the applicant states that the routing would avoid direct root damage or incursion of works into any Root Protection Areas. No temporary ground protection is required since construction of the facility would be outside root protection areas and incursion into root protection areas along the existing access is accepted. The Arboricultural consultant would need to supervise the track upgrade / construction, including taking notes and photographs showing how the trees would be safeguarded as required by condition. Details of utility / service runs and Arboricultural supervision could be secured through condition through submission of an Arboricultural Method Statement.

- 10.81 The Tree Officer raised concerns that some of the trees may become under pressure for excessive tree surgery operations or removal as they may be perceived as a nuisance. If this were to occur, the verdant nature of the site would be diminished. However, the Tree Officer has not objected to the proposal on this issue. It is also noted that the proposed buildings of greatest scale and height would be at least 8 metres from the edge of the root protection area. As such, the proposal, with appropriate tree protection and mitigation, would preserve trees category A-C within the application site. The proposal would be in accordance with Policy 4 of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016) and Policy 14 of the Waste Plan (2019).

Climate

- 10.82 The agricultural sector is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the UK. It is dominated by methane, due to digestion processes from livestock and nitrous oxide emissions related to use of fertilisers on soils. The agricultural practice of open decomposition of manures, slurries and crop wastes releases methane and nitrous oxide into the atmosphere. Therefore, the anaerobic processing of these organic emissions in an enclosed and sealed environment removes unregulated emissions from the atmosphere.
- 10.83 The AD Facility would capture methane as biogas. It would produce around 9.9 million m³ of biomethane per year, enough to supply 8,500 homes and directly decarbonising part of the national gas grid. Carbon dioxide would also be captured in the upgrading of biogas to biomethane.
- 10.84 The proposal would be designed to operate as at least carbon neutral but is anticipated to be carbon negative. This is due to methane and carbon dioxide capture, digestate replacing synthetic fertilisers and soil carbon sequestration. Using the UK Biomass & Biogas Carbon Calculator, the scheme is expected to save approximately 6,584 tonnes of CO₂/year compared with natural gas.
- 10.85 The proposal would positively respond to Dorset Council's climate and ecological emergency and would be in accordance with Policy 3 of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016) and Policy 15 of the Waste Plan (2019).

Air Quality

- 10.86 An Air Quality Assessment has been submitted to support the application. Pollutant sources at the construction phase are identified as emissions of dust and during the operational phase as road vehicle emissions, the standby gas flare and the Combined Heat and Power (CHP) unit. The construction phase would include activities which would produce polluting emissions to air, the main one being dust. The dust emissions were assessed to be medium for earthworks, medium for construction and small for trackout (unpaved road used at this stage within the site). The report outlines a number of mitigation

measures to minimise impacts from dusts and fine particles during construction. This would result in a negligible risk with regard to nuisance dust soiling effects on adjacent uses, particulate matter (PM10) health effects and ecological impacts from emissions during the construction phase.

- 10.87 During the operational phase, the transport statement anticipates that the proposed would generate an increase of 10 Light-Duty Vehicles and 36 Heavy-Duty Vehicles when compared to the Annual Average Daily Traffic flows. These increases in flows are significantly lower than EPUK and IAQM traffic change thresholds on any specific road link of 500 Light-Duty Vehicles and 100 Heavy-Duty Vehicles. The Air Quality Assessment therefore concludes that traffic emissions associated with the proposal would have an insignificant impact on local air quality.
- 10.88 The Standby Gas Flare would be used occasionally during maintenance or other unexpected outage / emergency situations. It would enable biogas to be oxidised to avoid its release into the atmosphere. Operational controls and proactive equipment maintenance protocols would limit the use of the flare. The Air Quality Assessment concludes that further consideration of the flare can be scoped out of further consideration.
- 10.89 The CHP unit would be fitted with nitrogen oxide (NOx) abatement technology and has been assessed using two screening tools to provide an understanding of likely air quality effects. Both tools concluded that the CHP unit would be highly likely to have negligible impact on air quality at sensitive receptor locations. This included the nearest potential residential receptors and ecological receptor further afield.
- 10.90 UK Air Information Resource background concentrations and local air quality monitoring results from the wider area indicate that air quality in the local area is good, with pollutant concentrations across the site expected to be well below relevant UK Air Quality Standard concentrations. The mitigation measures related to dust impacts, insignificant impact upon local air quality by light-duty and heavy-duty vehicles increases and NOx abatement technology on the CHP unit would not significantly impact upon local air quality. The proposal would be in accordance with Policy 25 of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016) and Policy 13 of the Waste Plan (2019).

Odour

- 10.91 An Odour Assessment and Odour Management Plan have been submitted. The assessment of odour included a sniff test and review of historical complaints data. Given that the application site is currently undeveloped, the odour survey and complaints review were undertaken at an operational AD facility which uses a 'wet digestion' process with similar feedstocks, technologies and processes to what is proposed at Wessex Farm. The odour survey followed the methodologies recommended in the Environment Agency's odour guidance and the Institute of Air Quality Management's latest guidance on the assessment of odour for planning.
- 10.92 Based upon the sniff test survey, the frequency, intensity, duration and character of any potential odours would be in keeping with the agricultural land uses surrounding Wessex Farm. The proposal would be subject to a comprehensive Odour Management Plan (OMP), which would be monitored and enforced by the Environment Agency under the terms of an Environmental Permit. The OMP would require effective site management, such as the importance of closing the Feedstock building doors, immediately prior to the

receipt and after the deposition of feedstock material. It would also require a functioning Odour Control Unit.

- 10.93 The Odour Assessment noted that the nearest sensitive receptor at Wessex Farm would be approximately 360m away (north east) from odour generating equipment. The odour survey revealed that significant releases of unpleasant odours would not be detected much further than approximately 350m away. The Odour Assessment concluded that the proposal would be unlikely to present a significant odour impact. Environmental Protection have raised no adverse comments, subject to securing the implementation of the OMP through condition.
- 10.94 A draft OMP has been submitted. This identifies odorous activities would include:
- delivery of feedstocks on local roads and within the site;
 - feedstock intake and storage in the silage clamps and manure storage building;
 - the digestion process within the digestors and the pasteurisation unit;
 - digestate storage and movement to the liquid digestate lagoon and solid digestate within its storage unit.
- 10.95 Measures to prevent significant odours are proposed to include:
- digestion process to be strictly controlled and monitored. Immediate action on faults or issues that could increase odorous emissions;
 - undertaking maintenance during optimal meteorological conditions;
 - regular inspection and cleaning of external areas;
 - immediate cleaning of feedstock materials spillage;
 - increase in routine cleaning during warmer weather;
 - inspection and cleaning of vehicles prior to leaving the facility; and
 - liquid residue from surface and vehicle cleaning would be discharged to the liquid digestate lagoon.
- 10.96 Neighbours and the Waste Planning Authority would be provided with advanced notice of activities that could generate elevated odours. Regular monitoring through sniff tests would be undertaken daily. Complaints would be recorded and investigated to determine the source and extent of emissions. An odour diary would also be kept. The OMP sets out responses to abnormal events and emergency actions.
- 10.97 The proposed AD Facility would receive agricultural wastes which are commonly dispersed to the land and vent to the atmosphere. However, it is considered that the facility would provide a betterment since these potentially odorous wastes would be delivered into the enclosed feedstock building and would be fed into the anaerobic digesters, which are also enclosed plant. Through effective management of the AD Facility and an odour management plan to manage odorous feedstock during normal and abnormal operational circumstances, the proposal would minimise the potential for odorous effects upon the amenity of neighbouring residential receptors. The proposal would therefore be in accordance with Policy 25 of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016) and Policy 13 of the Waste Plan (2019).

Noise

- 10.98 The submitted Noise Impact Assessment provides an assessment of plant and HGV vehicle movement operations on nearby sensitive receivers around the site. The representative baseline sound levels were measured in three locations within the proposed

operational area, at the Wessex Farm buildings complex and adjacent to the A30. The daytime (07:00 – 23:00) levels were recorded as 37 - 46 dB La90,15min and the nighttime (23:00 – 07:00 hours) levels were recorded as 20 - 22 dB La90,15min.

- 10.99 Noise modelling was undertaken on the proposed plant. This revealed that noise control measures would be required for some individual units, including the Gas Cooling Plant, Separation Unit, CHP casing and the Pasteurisation Unit pumps. This could be achieved through acoustically encasing the units, attenuating the unit itself or selecting a quieter unit. It is considered that appropriate noise levels could be secured by condition.
- 10.100 The Noise Impact Assessment suggests that with acoustic enclosure measures on several of the plant, the daytime noise generated from the proposal would comfortably fall below the existing background noise climate. Night time noise is anticipated to fall within the 'Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level' of the Noise Policy Statement for England. The proposal would therefore comply with Policy 25 of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016) and Policy 13 of the Waste Plan (2019).

Pest Management

- 10.101 The site is located in a rural area that provides conditions for potentially providing food and shelter for pests. The proposed AD facility would receive, store and process feedstocks of agricultural wastes or animal by-products that are particularly attractive to all forms of pests. Notwithstanding this, the feedstock materials that may offer opportunities for feed and or a medium for breeding include cereal bin ends, husks, cattle slurry, poultry manure, separated slurry (from pig and cattle), farmyard manure, and fruit/vegetable waste and brewing products. The pests that could be attracted to the proposed development would include birds, rodents/vermin and insects.
- 10.102 Pest prevention measures would include the feedstock building doors remaining closed at all times, other than on receipt of delivery vehicles and entry/exit of personnel. Doors would be closed before tipping of material and then opened to enable the exit of vehicles. The building would also have a negative internal air pressure system which would draw air inwards when the doors are open. All air within the building would then pass through a biofilter to contain odours that may attract pests. The clamps would be located within an area designed with reinforced concrete walls. Outdoor feedstock would be covered with geotextile material to preserve the biomass from aerobic spoilage and contain odours that may attract pests. Covers would only be drawn back enough to receive and compact new feedstock and to load the digester. Covers would be returned once loading operations are complete.
- 10.103 The site would have a routine which would include staff training, regular hygiene and cleaning, equipment maintenance, inspections and response to potential incidences of pests. Details are provided within the submitted Pest Management Plan and could be secured by condition. The proposal would therefore be in accordance with Policy 25 of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016) and Policy 13 of the Waste Plan (2013).

Neighbouring Amenity

- 10.104 The application site is located within a rural location with low density housing surrounding the site. Wessex Farm itself, which is located to the south east of the proposed AD Facility, is the closest dwelling with approximately 310m separation distance. Foxview, which is also part of the Wessex Farm complex, is located due south approximately 348m away.
- 10.105 Turning to dwellings beyond Wessex Farm, there are a number of listed buildings within proximity. These include Whitehouse Farm at approximately 350m (north east), Silver Ley and Woolcott's Farm at approximately 390m (south) and Fernbrook Farm at approximately 515m (north west). These listed buildings and their settings are considered in more detail below.
- 10.106 The two other closest dwellings to the proposal include Causeway Farmhouse at approximately 380m (south) and Hunters Lodge at approximately 390m (south west).
- 10.107 Amenity issues relating to highways, air quality, odour, noise and pest management are considered above and mitigation could be secured by conditions to manage and minimise adverse impacts to neighbouring amenity. A lighting strategy would be secured through condition to mitigate against light pollution to surrounding neighbours. The applicant is also proposing that manned operation hours for the AD Facility would be between 07:00 and 20:00 seven days a week. During the harvest period, extended hours for delivery of crops would be possible since harvest is dependent upon opportunities provided by the weather and secured by condition. With this suggested mitigation, it is considered that the proposal would not result in any significant adverse impacts to neighbouring amenity. The proposal would therefore accord with Policy 25 of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016) and Policy 13 of the Waste Plan (2019).

Heritage Assets

- 10.108 A Heritage Assessment has been submitted which identifies seven heritage assets within 1km of the site. This study area was selected due to the potential impact of the proposal upon the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets in short to long range views across the landscape. Other heritage assets beyond the study area with the potential to be affected by the proposals were also considered and included two scheduled monuments at Castle Hill, Shaftesbury Conservation Area and Motcombe Conservation Area. The application site itself is of no heritage interest.
- 10.109 The seven heritage assets within 1km of the AD Facility operation area are all Grade II Listed Buildings. These include White House Farm (370m north), Woolcotts Farm (500m south), Silver Ley Farm (500m south east), Duncliffe Farm (585m south west), Fernbrook Farm (510m south east), Long Cross Farm (1km east) and Mile Post (1km east).
- 10.110 Long Cross Farm and Mile Post both have settings within residential development of varying age. The other listed buildings have settings which are generally contained to the listed building itself, associated buildings and surrounding undulating farmland. Woolcotts Farm and Silver Ley Farm are close enough to compliment each other. White House Farm and Fernbrook Farm are both reasonably excluded from other properties.
- 10.111 The proposed development would be on lower ground level with intervening topography and vegetation that would assist in the proposal being screened from settings of these listed buildings. Additional strategic planting along the application site boundaries would

variously mitigate the Slight or Slight to Moderate Adverse effects on the setting of some of the heritage assets in the longer term.

- 10.112 Motcombe Conservation Area is located approximately 1.5km to the north of the application site. There would be sufficient separation distance and intervening vegetation so that the proposal would not impair or isolate views of the designation.
- 10.113 The scheduled monuments at Castle Hill and the Shaftesbury Conservation Area are located approximately 1.5km to the south east of the application site. Principal views of the assets are from the wider area, including the A30, where they are notable as a high spur of land within dense vegetation. The proposed development would be visible in far-reaching views from Castle Hill (late Saxon urban area) Scheduled Monument (within the Shaftesbury Conservation Area) due to its elevated location and open park. This view comprises the countryside, farmsteads, nearby residential development and Hawker Hill energy park.
- 10.114 Taking into account the proposed additional planting along the eastern boundary, the applicant's heritage assessment states that the view towards the application site would result in a 'slight adverse' impact on the settings of the scheduled monuments and Conservation Area.
- 10.115 The value of the seven listed buildings was assessed as being 'medium' and of the two Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas as being 'high'. The predicted significance of the impact of the proposal at year 1 and year 15 is shown in the table below for each of the heritage assets:

Asset	Predicted significance of the impact Year 1	Predicted significance of the impact Year 15
Woolcotts Farm	Slight (adverse)	Slight
Silver Ley Farm	Slight (adverse)	Slight
Duncliffe Farmhouse	Slight (adverse)	Neutral
White House Farmhouse	Moderate (adverse)	Slight (adverse)
Fernbrook Farmhouse	Slight (adverse)	Slight (adverse)
Long Cross Farm	Neutral (adverse)	Neutral
Mile Post	Neutral (adverse)	Neutral
Castle Hill – medieval fortified house	Slight (adverse)	Slight (adverse)
Castle Hill – late Saxon urban area	Moderate (adverse)	Slight (adverse)
Shaftesbury CA	Moderate (adverse)	Slight (adverse)
Motcombe CA	Neutral (adverse)	Neutral (adverse)

- 10.116 The proposal would result in a slight / moderate (adverse) and neutral level of impact upon the significance of the identified heritage assets. This assessment took into account the agricultural scale and appearance of the proposed development.
- 10.117 The Heritage Assessment concludes that whilst the proposal would result in some visual change within the setting of heritage assets and key views from Castle Hill / Shaftesbury Conservation Area, when assessed as a whole, it would not diminish the area's distinct character and appearance. The identified heritage assets would be sufficiently distanced so that intervening topography and established vegetation would partly or wholly screen the development from view.

- 10.118 Mitigation is proposed in the form of new planting along the eastern and southern boundaries of the operational part of the site. This would variously mitigate the Slight or Slight to Moderate Adverse effects on the setting of some of the heritage assets. Tree screening along the eastern boundary of the Site would lessen the impact of the proposed development on the setting and views from the Castle Hill (late Saxon burh) Scheduled Monument and Shaftesbury Conservation Area.
- 10.119 The Council's Conservation Officer has advised that the methodology used by the Heritage Assessment is supported and accepts that the proposed development would result in 'less than substantial harm' to all of the heritage assets and their settings.
- 10.120 Paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework (amended 2025) requires that 'where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal'.
- 10.121 Public benefits would include supporting a circular economy; providing treatment of local agricultural and animal waste that would otherwise be disposed of or spread directly on agricultural land; production of renewable energy, primarily as biogas for the national grid, but also as some electricity for on-site use; and use of liquid and sold digestate as fertiliser on agricultural feedstock source sites.
- 10.122 It is considered that these public benefits would outweigh the less than substantial harm that would occur to nearby heritage assets, both on individual assets and cumulatively. The proposal would therefore be in accordance with Policy 5 of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016), Policy 19 of the Waste Plan (2019) and Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (amended 2025).

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 10.123 A Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy has been submitted which shows the application site is within Flood Zone 1, as indicated by the Environment Agency's (EA) indicative flood maps. Some parts of the site are identified as being at risk from surface water flooding, notably the northern and southern boundaries along the Fern Brook. Data indicates there is negligible risk from the emergence of groundwater due to the nature of the local geological deposits. As such, the flood risk to the site is compatible with the proposed development.
- 10.124 The Geo-Environmental Site Investigation has been reviewed and indicates that infiltration will not be feasible at the site due to the clay-based geology. The Flood Risk Engineer accepts the evidence that suggests that infiltration on site is highly unlikely to be a viable surface water disposal method hence why the applicant has devised a strategy based on discharge to an adjacent watercourse. Paragraph 4.7 of the Technical Note 2 states that 'As the underlying soils are clay and soakaways are unlikely to be a viable method of disposal of surface water, which is also indicated by the presences of watercourses in the area, we would respectfully suggest that the ground conditions data affirms the earlier assumptions regarding infiltration potential. The basis for the drainage strategy proposed is sound and that infiltration testing would be unlikely to inform otherwise. Nevertheless, fully anticipating that refined drainage details will be required by condition on any planning permission when the AD technologies are confirmed and before

development is commenced, it would be reasonable, if still considered necessary, to include any requirement for a full BRE365 soakage test to be provided at that stage’.

- 10.125 Additional drainage information has been submitted by the applicant which demonstrates the drainage scheme would be viable and deliverable, should mitigate flood risk to the site and not create or exacerbate off site worsening. A detailed surface management scheme and the management and maintenance of the surface water sustainable drainage scheme and any receiving system could be secured by condition. Subject to agreement of details, the proposal would be in accordance with Policy 13 of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016) and Policy 17 of the Waste Plan (2019).

15. Planning Balance and Overall Conclusions

- 10.126 This application is for an anaerobic digestion facility principally being supplied with agricultural manures, slurries and crop, to produce biomethane and bio-fertiliser. The proposal would also generate electricity through the installation of combined heat and power equipment and collection of carbon dioxide during the upgrade of produced biogas to biomethane.
- 10.127 The proposal would recover waste since it produces energy through biogas and some electricity. Nutrients would be returned to agricultural land through liquid and solid digestates. As such, waste would be moved up the waste hierarchy and is therefore considered acceptable in principle. The proposal would be considered at least carbon neutral and would positively respond to Dorset Council’s climate and ecological emergency.
- 10.128 Whilst there would remain a degree of landscape and visual harm resulting from the proposal, particularly to the most sensitive viewpoints such as Castle Hill, the longer term adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity would not be classed as significant. The separation distance, provision of an effective landscape planting scheme and the accepted increase in vehicle movements generated by the proposal would not result in adverse harm to the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs National Landscape.
- 10.129 The proposal would result in no more than 1.31% increase in vehicle movements along the A30 Sherborne Causeway. This percentage has been calculated as a worst case for the AM peak period during the harvest months. The proposed widened entrance and new access with passing places would improve road safety for existing residents and Wessex Farm.
- 10.130 Feedstock is likely to be sourced from within a 15-mile radius. Solid and liquid digestate would be primarily used on agricultural land where feedstock was supplied from.
- 10.131 Implementation of precautionary measures and mitigation would ensure the proposal would not result in negative impacts on protected species such as great crested newts, dormice and bats. Ecological enhancements have also been identified. BNG would deliver on-site significant habitats which would require managing and monitoring for 30 years.
- 10.132 Trees protected by the area tree preservation order would be preserved through appropriate tree protection and mitigation.

- 10.133 The baseline air quality in the local area is good and the proposal would not have adverse impact on air quality.
- 10.134 The potential for odorous effects of feedstock and AD products upon the amenity of neighbouring residential receptors would be minimised through effective management of the facility and an odour management plan.
- 10.135 Acoustic enclosure measures would be provided on several of the plant. The daytime noise generated from the proposal would comfortably fall below the existing background noise climate. Night time noise is anticipated to fall within the 'Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level'.
- 10.136 The site would have a routine which would include staff training, regular hygiene and cleaning, equipment maintenance, inspections and response to potential incidences of pests.
- 10.137 Conditions can be part of the permission in relation to noise, operating hours and submission of details for possible floodlighting, which would mitigate against impacts on neighbouring amenity.
- 10.138 The proposal would result in 'less than substantial harm' to the nearest heritage assets and their settings, which would be mitigated by the public benefits that would arise from the development.
- 10.139 The flood risk to the site is compatible with the proposed development. Infiltration has been demonstrated to be unviable as a surface water disposal method and discharge to the adjacent watercourse is accepted.
- 10.140 The proposal has been assessed against the relevant Waste Plan, Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies. The proposal would deliver measurable public benefits including, but not limited to, supporting a circular local agricultural economy, moving agricultural wastes up the waste hierarchy, generating economic activity, production of renewable energy, capture of carbon dioxide, reduction in use of synthetic fertilisers through the use of liquid and solid digestate, ecological enhancements and biodiversity net gain. Whilst the longer term adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity would not be significant, the construction of the AD facility would result in a degree of landscape and visual harm which would reduce over time as new landscaping establishes around the site. The local community has raised numerous concerns about the perceived impacts of the proposal. It is considered that this AD Facility, with proposed conditions, would result in a well managed and maintained operation to ensure that potential adverse environmental impacts such as traffic, air quality, odour, noise, pests and water runoff / discharges are mitigated. These considerations have been weighed, recognising positive and negative effects and assigning proportionate weight. On balance, the benefits of the proposal are considered to outweigh the identified harms. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations indicating that permission should be refused. Accordingly, the application is recommended to be granted planning permission with conditions.

16. Recommendation

Grant Planning Permission, subject to the following conditions:

1. Commencement

The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: This condition is required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. Plans List - Approved

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

220904-06 C Location Plan
005 P10 Full Site Block Plan 005-P10.pdf
0489-00-D 04 Operational Area Site Layout 0489-00 D
003 P10 Operational Area Block Plan 003 P10
0489-00-D 1 Elevation and Sections (Front) - Proposed
2209024-07 A Proposed A30 Access Arrangement
0489-01-B 01 Silage Clamp
0489-02-B 1 Feedstock Unit
0489-03-B 01 Digestate Lagoon
0489-04-A 01 Propane Injection Storage
0489-05-C 05 Biogas Upgrade Plant
0489-06-A 01 Separator Plant
0489-07-A 1 Digestate Containment Area
0489-08-A 1 Liquid-pre Store
0489-09-A 1 Liquid-post Store
0489-11-A 1 Pasteurisation Unit
0489-10-A 01 Solids Feeder Unit
0489-12-A 01 Ferric Chloride Tank
0489-14-A 01 Active Carbon Filter
0489-15-A 1 Grid Entry Unit
0489-16-A 01 LV Board Unit
0489-17-A 01 Back-up Generator
0489-18-A 01 Sub-station Unit
0489-19-A 01 CHP & Cooling Unit
0489-20-A 01 Biogas Flare
0489-21-A 01 Boiler Unit
0489-22-A 01 Switchboard Unit
2209024-04 E Proposed Access Arrangement Overview
2209024-01 B Visibility Splays

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

3. Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan

The development shall not be commenced until a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (the HMMP) has been prepared in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan and submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Waste Planning Authority. The HMMP shall include:

- i) A non-technical summary;
- ii) The roles and responsibilities of the people or organisation(s) delivering the HMMP;

- iii) The planned habitat creation and enhancement works to create or improve habitat to achieve the biodiversity net gain in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan and a timetable for implementation;
- iv) The management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan for a period of 30 years from the completion of the habitat and enhancement works as set out in the HMMP.
- v) The monitoring methodology and frequency in respect of the created or enhanced habitat to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

Thereafter the development shall be carried out, along with the management and monitoring of habitat, in accordance with the approved HMMP.

Reason: In the interests of biodiversity to secure the monitoring and management of significant onsite habitats and in accordance with Policy 18 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

4. HMMP - Completion

Notice in writing shall be given to the Waste Planning Authority within one month of the date of habitat creation and enhancement works as set out in the approved HMMP having been completed. The notice shall include a completion report evidencing the completed habitat enhancements.

Reason: In the interests of biodiversity to secure the monitoring and management of significant onsite habitats and in accordance with Policy 18 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

5. Details of Earthworks

Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved, full details of earthworks shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Waste Planning Authority. These details shall include proposed grading and mounding of land including the levels and contours to be formed, showing the relationship of the proposed mounding to the existing vegetation and surrounding landform. No part of the development, other than the creation of the access, shall be commissioned until the works are completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of maintaining the landscape and amenity value of the area and in accordance with Policies 13 and 14 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

6. Detailed Surface Water Management Scheme

No development shall take place until a detailed surface water management scheme for the site, based upon the hydrological and hydrogeological context of the development, and including clarification of how surface water is to be managed during construction, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Waste Planning Authority. This must include the results of on site infiltration testing undertaken in accordance with BRE365.

The surface water scheme shall be fully implemented in accordance with the submitted details before the development is completed.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding, to improve and protect water quality, and to improve habitat and amenity and in accordance with Policy 17 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

7. Surface Water Sustainable Drainage Scheme

Prior to first operation of the development, details of maintenance and management of both the surface water sustainable drainage scheme and any receiving system shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Waste Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented and thereafter managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details. These shall include a plan for the lifetime of the development, the arrangements for adoption by any public body or statutory undertaker, or any other arrangements to secure the operation of the surface water drainage scheme throughout its lifetime.

Reason: To ensure future maintenance of the surface water drainage system, and to prevent the increased risk of flooding and in accordance with Policy 17 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

8. Notification of Commencement of Development

Notice shall be provided to the Waste Planning Authority of the date of the commencement of development. This notice shall be provided in writing by the operator within seven days of the date of commencement.

Reason: To ensure an accurate record for monitoring of conditions relating to the date of the commencement of development and in accordance with Policy 6 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

9. Colour of Buildings and Plant

Prior to development being constructed above damp proof course level, details of the colour of walls and roofs of all buildings, structures and plant with elements over 4 metres in height shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Waste Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall proceed in accordance with the details as have been agreed.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and landscape character of the area and in accordance with Policy 14 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

10. Cover to Feedstocks Kept in Storage Clamp

Prior to the first operation of the development, full details of the feedstock storage clamp cover shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing by, the Waste Planning Authority. The details shall include the specification for the material to be used for the cover, its colour and any retraction mechanism. The cover shall be installed and maintained and retained in situ during operation of the AD facility in accordance with the approved details. Any feedstocks stored within any of the individual bays shall be covered by the approved cover in accordance with paragraph 3.35 - 3.38 of the Planning & Waste Statement.

Reason: To minimise any impact on the surrounding landscape character, neighbouring amenity and in accordance with Policies 13 and 14 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan 2019.

11. Liquid Digestate Lagoon

Prior to commencement of development, full details of the liquid digestate storage lagoon liner and cover, including the materials and colour, shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing by, the Waste Planning Authority. The storage lagoon shall be constructed in accordance with the agreed details and maintained and retained for the duration of the development.

Reason: In the interests of maintaining the landscape and amenity value of the area and in accordance with Policies 13 and 14 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

12. Detailed Landscaping Scheme

Prior to commencement of development, a detailed scheme of landscaping shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Waste Planning Authority. The soft landscaping works detailed in the approved scheme must be carried out in full during the first planting season (November to March) following commencement of the development. The soft landscaping shall be maintained in accordance with the agreed details and any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity, character of the area and biodiversity in accordance with Policies 13, 14 and 18 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

13. Height of Storage within Feedstock Clamps

Any feedstock that is stored in the clamps shall have a maximum height of 5 metres above ground level for any settled material.

Reason: To minimise any impact on the surrounding landscape character and in accordance with Policy 14 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan 2019.

14. Notification of commencement of operation of the AD facility

Notice shall be provided to the Waste Planning Authority of the date of the commencement of operation of the AD facility. This notice shall be provided in writing by the operator within seven days of the date of first operation.

Reason: To ensure an accurate record for monitoring of conditions relating to the date of the commencement of development and in accordance with Policy 6 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

15. Vehicle Access Construction

Before first operation of the development hereby approved, the first 20 metres of the vehicle access, measured from the rear edge of the highway (excluding the vehicle crossing - see the Informative Note below), must be laid out and constructed to a specification submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Waste Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that a suitably surfaced and constructed access to the site is provided that prevents loose material being dragged and/or deposited onto the adjacent carriageway causing a safety hazard and in accordance with Policy 12 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

16. Access Arrangements

Before first operation of the development hereby approved, the existing route to the farm yard, as shown on drawing no. 2209024-04 Rev E dated 25 April 2024, shall be stopped up in the area hatched in red and use by vehicles ceased. The stopped up route shall not be used for the duration of the development.

Reason: In the interests of neighbouring amenity, highway safety and in accordance with Policies 12 and 13 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

17. Turning / Manoeuvring and Parking Construction

Before first operation of the development hereby approved, the turning/manoeuvring and parking shown on Drawing Number 003 Rev. P10 dated 28 July 2025 must have been constructed. Thereafter, these areas, must be permanently maintained, kept free from obstruction and available for the purposes specified.

Reason: To ensure the proper and appropriate development of the site and to ensure that highway safety is not adversely impacted upon in accordance with Policy 12 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

18. Visibility Splays

Before first operation of the development hereby approved. the visibility splay areas as shown on Drawing Number 2209024-01 Rev B dated 6 December 2024 must be cleared/excavated to a level not exceeding 0.60 metres above the relative level of the adjacent carriageway. The splay areas must thereafter be maintained and kept free from all obstructions.

Reason: To ensure that a vehicle can see or be seen when exiting the access in accordance with Policy 12 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

19. Construction Vehicles

The maximum daily number of vehicle movements accessing the Wessex Farm Anaerobic Digester Facility site from the A30 during the construction period is limited to a maximum of 40 Heavy Goods Vehicles (20 in and 20 out) and 60 light vehicles (30 in and 30 out).

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and the amenity of the area and in accordance with Policy 12 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

20. Heavy Goods Vehicles

The maximum daily number of heavy goods vehicle movements accessing the Wessex Farm Anaerobic Digester Facility from the A30 for the duration of operations is limited to 70 Heavy Goods Vehicles (35 in and 35 out) during June, July and September and 32 Heavy Goods Vehicles (16 in and 16 out) during other months of the year.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and the amenity of the area and in accordance with Policy 12 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

21. Construction Traffic Management Plan

Before the development hereby approved commences the submitted Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) by Motion dated 10 March 2025 must be implemented and adhered to fully for the full duration of the construction period.

Reason: To minimise the likely impact of construction traffic on the surrounding highway network and prevent the possible deposit of loose material on the adjoining highway in accordance with Policy 12 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

22. Arboricultural Method Statement

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved (including demolition, material storage and all preparatory work), a scheme for the protection of the retained trees, in accordance with BS 5837:2012 (as amended), including a scaled tree protection plan (TPP) and an arboricultural method statement (AMS) shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Waste Planning Authority (WPA). The TPP and AMS shall include:

- a) A full specification for the construction of any roads, parking areas and driveways affecting trees' root protection areas (RPA). This shall include details of a no-dig construction method, the extent of areas to be constructed using this specification, and relevant cross-sections through these areas.
- b) Details of construction within or impacting the RPA of retained trees.
- c) Location and installation of services/utilities/ drainage.
- d) A full specification for the installation of boundary treatment.
- e) Detailed levels and cross-sections demonstrating that raised surfacing levels proposed for no-dig construction within RPAs can be accommodated without conflicting with adjacent building damp-proof courses.
- f) A specification for protective fencing during demolition and construction phases and a scaled plan showing its alignment.
- g) A specification for scaffolding and ground protection within tree protection zones.
- h) A Scaled Tree Protection Plan (TPP) showing protection measures and identifying prohibited construction activities within RPAs.
- i) Boundary treatments within RPAs.
- j) Methodology and detailed assessment of root pruning.
- k) Arboricultural supervision and inspection by a suitably qualified arboriculturist.
- l) Reporting procedure for inspection and supervision. Photographs and site supervision notes and photographs must be completed and submitted to the Waste Planning Authority.

m) Methods to improve rooting environments for retained and proposed trees and landscaping.

The development thereafter shall be implemented in strict accordance with the approved details.

Reason: Required prior to commencement of development to satisfy the Waste Planning Authority that the trees to be retained will not be damaged during demolition or construction and to protect and enhance the appearance and character of the site and locality in accordance with Policy 14 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

23. Feedstocks

No more than 97,000 tonnes of agricultural crop and waste feedstock shall be imported to the site per year. This shall consist of Agricultural Crops / Silage, Straw, Agricultural Slurry and Manure and Other Agricultural Waste. Records of material being delivered to the site shall be kept and made available to the Waste Planning Authority within 14 days of a written request.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety, landscape character and the amenities of residential properties and in accordance with Policies 12 and 13 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

24. Hours of Working

Excluding the delivery of fresh crop feedstock (grass, maize and whole crop silage) during the harvest times in June, July and September to supply the Anaerobic Digester Facility hereby approved, the site shall only be open to receive or dispatch any vehicle carrying other feedstocks, digestate or any other material or equipment associated with the operation of the site between the hours of 07:00 to 20:00 hours Mondays to Sundays.

No operations shall take place outside these hours except for maintenance and the operation of other equipment to maintain the safe operation of the Anaerobic Digester Facility.

Reason: To protect the amenities of local residents and in accordance with Policy 13 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

25. Noise Levels

The development hereby permitted shall be undertaken and shall operate within the noise parameters as set out within the Noise Impact Assessment by Acoustic Consultants Ltd (Reference: 10229/LN, Dated: 11 March 2025). Any noise attenuation which is installed on equipment or plant to achieve the required noise parameters shall be retained and maintained in effective order for the duration of the development.

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 13 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

26. Air Quality

The development hereby permitted shall be constructed and operate in accordance with mitigation set out within Air Quality Assessment by Phlorum Ltd (Reference: 12050A (AQ) V3 Final dated 12 March 2025) and associated Appendix A. Any mitigation measures shall be retained and maintained in effective order throughout the use of the site.

Reason: To ensure that the proposal does not result in any adverse impact on the amenities of the surrounding area and nearby residential properties or ecology and in accordance with Policy 13 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

27. Odour Management Plan

Odour control, prevention and monitoring measures shall be implemented in accordance with the Odour Management Plan by Phlorum Ltd (Reference: 12050A (OMP) V0, dated 18 March 2025). Measures shall be retained and maintained in effective order throughout the use of the site.

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 13 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

28. Unexpected Contamination of Land

In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development, it must be reported in writing immediately to the Waste Planning Authority and an investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance with requirements of BS10175 (as amended). Should any contamination be found requiring remediation, a remediation scheme, including a time scale, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Waste Authority. The approved remediation scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and on completion of the approved remediation scheme a verification report shall be prepared and submitted within two weeks of completion and submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure risks from contamination are minimised and in accordance with Policy 16 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

29. Construction Management Plan

Prior to the commencement of development on the site, a Construction Management Plan to manage any possible adverse effects associated with the construction of the development shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Waste Authority. The plan shall include construction management measures such as operating times, dust and noise mitigation, no bonfires and storage of waste materials prior to removal from site. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Plan.

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 13 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

30. Pest Management Plan

Pests shall be managed in accordance with Appendix D Pest Management Plan of the submitted Planning & Waste Statement dated July 2025. Measures shall be retained and maintained in effective order throughout the use of the site.

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 13 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

31. Ecological Impact Assessment

The development hereby permitted shall be implemented strictly in accordance with the recommendations and requirements in the Ecological Impact Assessment by Broadview Ecological Consultants (Reference: BEC/R/24/005, date: March 2025). The mitigation and enhancement measures shall be permanently maintained and retained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To mitigate for impacts on ecological receptors, and to provide biodiversity gains and in accordance with Policy 18 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

32. Lighting strategy

Prior to commencement of development, details of any proposed lighting shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Waste Planning Authority. The lighting strategy will reflect the need to avoid harm to protected species and to minimise light spill from lighting associated with pre-construction, construction and operational activities, and demonstrate how the current best practice guidance, including Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting (BCT/ILP, 2023) has been implemented. There shall be no lighting of the site other than in accordance with the approved strategy.

Reason: In the interests of biodiversity and neighbouring amenity and in accordance with Policies 13 and 18 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

33. Construction Environmental Management Plan

Prior to the commencement of development on the site, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) (Biodiversity) must be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Waste Planning Authority. The CEMP must include the following:

- a) Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities.
- b) Identification of "biodiversity protection zones".
- c) Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction, such as dust and noise (may be provided as a set of method statements).
- d) The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features.
- e) The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works.
- f) Responsible persons and lines of communication.
- g) The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person.
- h) Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs

i) Details of site access, temporary parking, welfare facilities, loading/unloading, operating times, and storage of equipment, materials, fuels and waste as well concrete mixing and prohibition of fires.

The development shall take place strictly in accordance with the approved CEMP.

Reason: To protect biodiversity during the construction phase and in accordance with Policy 14 and 18 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

34. Landscape and Ecological Management Plan

A landscape and ecological management plan (LEMP) shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Waste Planning Authority prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved, above damp course level or occupation. The content of the LEMP shall include the following:

- a) Description and evaluation of features to be managed.
- b) Ecological trends and constraints on site that might influence management.
- c) Aims and objectives of management.
- d) Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives.
- e) Prescriptions for management actions.
- f) Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five-year period).
- g) Details of the body or organization responsible for implementation of the plan.
- h) Ongoing monitoring and remedial measures.

The LEMP shall also include details of the legal and funding mechanisms by which the long-term implementation of the plan will be secured by the developer with the management body responsible for its delivery.

The LEMP shall also set out (where the results from monitoring show that conservation aims and objectives of the LEMP are not being met) how contingencies and/or remedial action will be identified, agreed and implemented so that the development still delivers the fully functioning biodiversity objectives of the originally approved scheme.

The approved LEMP must be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect the landscape character of the area and to mitigate, compensate and enhance/provide net gain for impacts on biodiversity in accordance with Policies 14 and 18 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

35. Means of Enclosure

Details of the means of enclosure to be used on the site including height, materials and positioning shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Waste Planning Authority. The agreed means of enclosure shall be erected prior to first operation and retained and maintained for the duration of the development.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity, landscape character of the area and in accordance with Policy 14 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

36. Cessation of the Site

Should the Anaerobic Digestion Facility hereby approved not supply gas for a continuous period of 12 months, it shall be deemed to have ceased to be required and shall be removed from the site, along with all associated plant and equipment. Within one month from the removal of the Anaerobic Digestion Facility and all associated plant and equipment, details of the restoration of the cleared site, including a restoration timetable, shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Waste Planning Authority. The cleared site shall thereafter be restored in accordance with the details so approved.

Reason: To ensure that any development which has ceased to serve its intended purpose is removed from the site, in the interests of amenity of the area and in accordance with Policies 13 and 14 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

Informative Notes:

1. Biodiversity Gain Plan

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition "(the biodiversity gain condition)" that development may not begin unless:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be Dorset Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. These are listed below.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements listed below are considered to apply.

Read more about Biodiversity Net Gain and Biodiversity Gain Plans at
<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/biodiversity-net-gain> and
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/submit-a-biodiversity-gain-plan>

2. Statutory Exemptions and Transitional Arrangements in respect of the Biodiversity Gain Plan

- 1. The application for planning permission was made before 12 February 2024.
- 2. The planning permission relates to development to which section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (planning permission for development already carried out) applies.
- 3. The planning permission was granted on an application made under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and
 - (i) the original planning permission to which the section 73 planning permission relates* was granted before 12 February 2024; or

(ii) the application for the original planning permission* to which the section 73 planning permission relates was made before 12 February 2024.

4. The permission which has been granted is for development which is exempt being:

4.1 Development which is not 'major development' (within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015) where:

i) the application for planning permission was made before 2 April 2024;

ii) planning permission is granted which has effect before 2 April 2024; or

iii) planning permission is granted on an application made under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 where the original permission to which the section 73 permission relates* was exempt by virtue of (i) or (ii).

4.2 Development below the de minimis threshold, meaning development which:

i) does not impact an onsite priority habitat (a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006); and

ii) impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat (as defined in the statutory metric).

4.3 Development which is subject of a householder application within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. A "householder application" means an application for planning permission for development for an existing dwellinghouse, or development within the curtilage of such a dwellinghouse for any purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse which is not an application for change of use or an application to change the number of dwellings in a building.

4.4 Development of a biodiversity gain site, meaning development which is undertaken solely or mainly for the purpose of fulfilling, in whole or in part, the Biodiversity Gain Planning condition which applies in relation to another development, (no account is to be taken of any facility for the public to access or to use the site for educational or recreational purposes, if that access or use is permitted without the payment of a fee).

4.5 Self and Custom Build Development, meaning development which:

i) consists of no more than 9 dwellings;

ii) is carried out on a site which has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares; and

iii) consists exclusively of dwellings which are self-build or custom housebuilding (as defined in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015).

4.6 Development forming part of, or ancillary to, the high speed railway transport network (High Speed 2) comprising connections between all or any of the places or parts of the transport network specified in section 1(2) of the High Speed Rail (Preparation) Act 2013.

* "original planning permission means the permission to which the section 73 planning permission relates" means a planning permission which is the first in a sequence of two or more planning permissions, where the second and any subsequent planning permissions are section 73 planning permissions.

3. This application is subject to Biodiversity Net Gain. A Section 106 Agreement is likely to be required to secure the maintenance and monitoring of any Biodiversity Gain Plan or Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) approved by the Council.

4. Dorset Highways

In addition to this permission, the vehicle crossing serving this proposal (that is, the area of highway land between the nearside carriageway edge and the site's road boundary) must be constructed to the specification of the Highway Authority in order to comply with Section 184 of the Highways Act 1980. The applicant should contact Dorset Highways by telephone at 01305 221020, by email at

dorsethighways@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, or in writing at Dorset Highways, Dorset Council, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ, before the commencement of any works on or adjacent to the public highway.

5. 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 applicant was provided with pre-application advice.