

**PLANNING STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF NON MATERIAL AMENDMENT TO REPOSITION 2NO. ANAEROBIC DIGESTION TANKS APPROVED UNDER PLANNING PERMISSION 18/0843/NCC & FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE PROVISION OF A CHP ENGINE, FLUE AND ASSOCIATED WORKS AT GELLIARGWELLT UCHAF FARM, GELLIGAER ROAD, GELLIGAER, HENGOED, CF82 8FY**

## 1. Introduction

This Planning Statement is prepared on behalf of Bryn Power Ltd in respect of the following applications at the existing Anaerobic Digestion facility at Gelliargwellt Uchaf Farm, Gelligaer Road, Gelligaer, CF82 8FY:

- Non Material Amendment to reposition 2no. Anaerobic digestion tanks approved under planning permission 18/0843/NCC; and
- Full Planning Application for the provision of a CHP engine, flue and associated works.

The proposals seek to optimise the use of the facility and the biogas created. This Statement covers the combined effects of the developments proposed in these 2 planning applications.

The following documents are enclosed in respect of each application:

- Planning Application Forms, Highlight Planning;
- CIL Form, Highlight Planning;
- Plans and drawings, JPCE Ltd;
- Landscape and Visual Statement (and associated illustrations), McQuitty Landscape Design;
- Air Quality Assessment, Environmental Visage;
- Coal Mining Risk Assessment (associated with the original planning permission), JPCE Ltd.

## 2. Site Context

Gelliargwellt Uchaf Farm comprises a range of farm buildings, large cattle barns, storage areas and buildings.

As well as a working farm, Gelliargwellt Uchaf is also the operational base for the Bryn Group Ltd which operates a Quarry, Green Waste Facility and Materials Recycling Facility (MRF). All of the operations and land within the immediate vicinity of the site are under the control of the applicant and its affiliated companies which form part of the Bryn Group Ltd.

The site contains no statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations nor does it include any Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas or Scheduled Ancient Monuments. There is however, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (Nelson Bog SSSI) which is located circa 0.85km to the south of the site and the Farmhouse is a Grade II Listed Building within the farm complex approximately 230m to the south east.

The application site already has planning permission (originally granted under LPA Ref 11/0266/FUL and subsequently amended) for the erection of a building and tanks to incorporate an anaerobic digestion facility with associated plant, engineering and landscaping works, which was allowed at appeal on 28th March 2013. Accordingly, the principle of the proposed Anaerobic Digestion Facility has already been accepted and approved at the site. These proposals are to provide changes arising from the detailed design of the AD system.

## 3. Proposed Development

The proposed works which are the subject of the applications are:

- minor (non-material) repositioning of 2 previously consented tanks;
- A new CHP engine and flue which would be approximately 19m compared with a consented 10m high flue;

- The diameter of the new flue will be 700mm compared with the present flues on Site which are approximately 300-400mm diameter;
- The proposed flue is to be constructed of stainless steel but coated in a muted colour - RAL 6009 Fir Green.

#### 4. Planning Policy Context

Relevant planning policies include:

- Future Wales 2040: the national plan 2040;
- Caerphilly LDP – including:
  - SP6 Place Making;
  - CW2 Amenity;
  - CW3 Highways and transportation;
  - CW 4 Natural Heritage Protection;
  - CW15 General Locational Constraints.
- Planning Policy Wales
- TAN 21: Waste

#### 5. Planning Analysis

##### Principle of Development

The principle of development has been established through the original 2013 planning permission at the site.

National waste planning policy is generally supportive of proposals to drive waste up the waste hierarchy and to divert it from landfill. While the proposal does not propose additional throughput it seeks to accommodate changes which optimise the site's capacity.

The proposals enable the more efficient processing of municipal food waste collections (e.g. from Caerphilly County Borough households). It will also allow a greater level of slurry and silage crops to be utilised within the facility from the adjacent farm in order to reduce odour from the spreading of slurry on the farmland. The proposals therefore support the Circular Economy advocated in national planning policy.

The proposed amendments to the AD Facility will enable a greater level of renewable heat and electricity to be generated. The Council's Ystrad Mynach Masterplan SPG recognises the importance of the facility at Paras 5.23 and 5.24:

*"Bryn Group Waste Management and Recycling facility is located within the Masterplan area. It's Anaerobic Digestion (AD) plant assists in making a meaningful contribution to the Welsh Government's target to generate 70% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030 and achieve an 80% reduction in CO2 levels by 2050 (against 1990 levels). The AD plant plays a key role in receiving green and food waste collected from local residents in Caerphilly county borough and currently produces 1MW every hour of renewable electricity, which is utilised on site and sent to the National Grid which supplies electricity to South Wales. This is equivalent to powering 2,500 homes 24/7 for a whole year.*

*The facility is also linked to research projects with South Wales University which seek to maximise efficiencies in renewable energy generation, support energy security and maximise job opportunities in the sector. Education and welfare facilities are being promoted at the site."*

The proposals will moreover enable the planned installation of a HV (11kV) private connection between Bryn Power Ltd and Caerphilly CBC's Tredomen Business Park Estate – further supporting the Council's aspirations and commitments for renewable energy.

In addition to Bryn Power's links to research projects with South Wales University, the facility provides site visits for local pupils in year 4/5/6 how learn about recycling and waste reduction as part of the curriculum.

### **Design, Appearance and Landscape Impacts**

Policy SP6 B requires new development to demonstrate a high standard of design that reinforces attractive qualities of local distinctiveness.

The amendment to the positioning of the two AD tanks is considered de minimis and non material in nature.

In respect of the new CHP engine and flue, the enclosed Landscape and Visual Statement prepared by McQuitty Landscape Design concludes that:

*"The location of the proposed AD amendment development benefits from a high degree of enclosure from existing consented buildings and structures which themselves are set within a strong framework of previous earth mounding and mitigation planting, much of the latter now well established.*

*In this context, the proposed development represents a very small landscape and visual change which will result in generally negligible landscape and visual effects on the surrounding landscape and identified visual receptors.*

*It is our view therefore that this proposed development would have no unacceptable landscape and visual effects, including on the geographically extensive locally designated Mynydd Eglwysilan Special Landscape Area."*

### **Amenity**

The enclosed Air Quality Assessment prepared by Environmental Visage concludes the following:

*"It is therefore concluded that, based on the releases to atmosphere from the existing and proposed plant at Bryn Power Limited, modelled in combination and at maximum permitted emission levels, the Process Contributions from the proposed future operations can be screened as being not significant in relation to human health, and insignificant or very small at local sensitive ecological sites."*

The facility is located within the site's purpose built landscape bund and will not give rise to any additional noise impacts. The conditions associated with noise on the original permission can be carried forward to the new permissions resulting from these applications.

### **Transportation**

The proposals do not result in the overall site processing more waste than presently received at the site as regulated by the relevant Environmental Permits, but rather enables it to be utilised more efficiently. Accordingly, there will be no increase in vehicle movements. Likewise, this application does not seek any extension to the existing controlled hours of operation. Construction impacts will be adequately controlled.

### **Ground Conditions**

The plateau for the development site has already been created on the basis of the previously approved development.

Due to the historic mine workings in the wider area, the Coal Mining Risk Assessment associated with the original application is enclosed, which demonstrates that the site is not at risk of subsidence or other ground condition issues.

**Drainage**

The site's existing drainage arrangements will continue to be utilised. The works covered by the full planning application fall under the thresholds for requiring a separate SAB approval.

**6. Conclusions**

In summary, the proposed development, which seeks to improve the operations of the existing facility, accords with LDP policy CW15, would contribute positively to sustainable waste management by enhancing processing of waste and would increase the facility's renewable energy generation capacity.

I trust that the above and enclosed are sufficient to enable your consideration and positive determination of the applications. However, if you require any further evidence to assist with your consideration of this application please do not hesitate to ask.

**Joe Ayoubkhani, Highlight Planning, September 2023**