

Introduction

- 12.1 This ES provides a detailed and objective analysis of the potential environmental effects of the proposed AD facility. Each technical assessment which supports the planning application and the EIA has been undertaken in accordance with up-to-date guidance and standards and the conclusion of the planning application and EIA is that there is no single issue or combination of issues that should prevent the proposed development from proceeding.
- 12.2 The ES presents information to Wiltshire Council (WC) and other consultees, to help them consider the benefits of the proposed development. All developments result in some level of environmental impact and the purpose of national and local planning policy is to ensure that these impacts are within acceptable limits. The conclusions of the technical assessments which support the proposed development is that subject to the mitigation measures identified in the assessments, the proposed development could operate with no significant adverse impacts on environment.
- 12.3 The ES sets out the results of very careful, detailed and systematic research into the potential effects of the development and where relevant, sets out modern and well-designed methods of mitigating the effects. These, along with the conclusions of the technical assessments which support the planning application, include measures which have been incorporated into the design of the AD facility as in-built mitigation measures.
- 12.4 The ES also describes the details of the landscaping scheme which would be implemented and would deliver an increase in the habitat biodiversity value of the site of up to **19%** and in the linear habitat (hedgerow) an increase in biodiversity value of the site of up to **102%**. By demonstrating a level of enhancement at or greater than a 1% change the proposed development, in line with recent caselaw, is considered to satisfy the current requirement for biodiversity enhancement under the National Planning Policy Framework¹. The level of net gain also satisfies the future ambition of 10% BNG set out within the Environment Act.
- 12.5 Planning policy issues are explored in the Planning, Design and Access Statement. The key conclusions from this analysis is that there is wide support for developments which provide a sustainable means of generating low carbon, renewable energy. The development would provide employment during construction and operation, which in turn returns money into the local economy.
- 12.6 The proposed AD facility would produce biomethane which could be used directly to heat homes and fuel vehicles. The proposed development would provide enough green gas to meet the heating demand of 8,700 UK households (based on 12.3MWh/y per household). In comparison with standard UK grid emissions, the biomethane produced by the AD facility would have an equivalent saving of 34,000 tonnes of CO₂e each year, equivalent to taking 22,600 cars off the road. Subsistence in power is increasingly important in these times of rapidly rising fuel prices and uncertainty over imported energy.

- 12.7 The production of biomethane would be in line with local and national targets for reducing CO₂ emissions and reducing reliance on fossil fuels, whilst also contributing to fuel self-sufficiency and support the achievement of the UK Government's and Wiltshire Council's targets for achieving net zero by 2050 (or before). In addition, the solid and liquid digestate would be spread on surrounding farmland in place of artificial fertilisers, thereby reducing the reliance on imported fertiliser.
- 12.8 In summary, the proposed development would provide a range of environmental benefits and could proceed in a way which minimises environmental effects, and the effects from operations could be maintained within acceptable limits.