CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2023/07227
Application Type:	Full planning permission
Site Inspection:	
Consultation ends:	27 September 2023
Case officer:	Jemma Foster

Site Address:	Codford Biogas, Malmpit Hill, Codford, Warminster, BA12 0FD
Proposal:	A Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) consisting of 4no. battery containers
Recommendation:	Approve with Conditions

POLICIES

Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)
Core Policy 42: Standalone Renewable Energy Installations
Core Policy 51: Landscape
Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
Core Policy 62: Development impacts on the transport network

Other
Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (The Framework)

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/2023/04260 – New Digester Tank, Hydrolysis Tank, Pasteurisation Equipment, Gas Holder Biodome, CO2 Clean-Up Station and Gas-to-Transport Station – No decision at the time of writing this report

PL/2023/06854 - Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) on 16/01451/FUL to allow for increased height of the building extension - Approved 3rd October 2023

PL/2022/04724 – Forming of trench and laying of below ground services linking between the Anaerobic Digester site and adjacent glasshouse site. Services to provide flow and return of hotwater, electricity export, communications ducting. Trench width and depth 1.5m x 1.5m. – Approved

PL/2022/04199 – Addition of buffer tank, pressure equipment housing apparatus and associated work within the established Codford Anaerobic Digestor site. – Approved

PL/2022/03070 Non-Material Amendment to 18/02195/FUL Decision 25th April 2022

PL/2021/11744 Installation of a Private Electricity Sub-Station, a DNO Electricity Sub-Station, Storage Container, Communications Cabinet and Transformer. Approved 18/03/22

PL/2021/09497 Installation of electrical substation / transformer unit in the form of converted shipping container(s) together with associated works and underground cabling. Change of use from agriculture. Approved 27/01/22.

PL/2021/07785 – Discharge of condition 3 of 19/09703/WCM – Approved

20/02704/WCM – Variation of conditions 12 and 13 of W/11/00745/WCM to allow vehicle delivery movement from 07:00 on weekdays and to allow 50 vehicle movements per day (Mon to Fri) and 12 on Saturdays – Approved

19/09703/WCM – Erection of a Efficiency Enhancement Digester Tank, Combined Heat & Power Unit (CHP), Gas-to-Transport Station and Rainwater Reservoir and change of use of the land from agricultural use. – Approved

18/02195/FUL Erection of Glasshouses and associated works. Approve with conditions 8th July 2018

16/01451/FUL – Proposed building extension and erection of feedstock buffer tank. – Approved

15/11066/FUL Erection of glasshouse and associated works. Approve with conditions.
Approved 6th October 2016

14/05983/WCM – Variation of Condition 12 of planning application W/12/01872/WCM - to spread deliveries over more days, ease intensity to local area from deliveries and deal with increased demand – Withdrawn

13/05001/FUL Erection of up to 22,000 ground mounted solar panels, landscaping and associated works. Approved 1st July 2014

W/13/00775/AGD – Proposed open ended barn with hardstanding for storage of woodchip – Approved

W/12/01872/WCM – Variation of conditions 2, 10 and 18 of planning application W/11/00745/WCM (Demolition of redundant dairy unit, development of Anaerobic Digestion Facility, installation of underground electric cable, improvement of existing private road and associated landscaping works) to facilitate a change in design and revisions to approved plans – Approved

W/11/00745/WCM – Demolition of redundant dairy unit, development of Anaerobic Digestion Facility, installation of underground electric cable, improvement of existing private road and associated landscaping works - Approved

CONSULTATION RESPONSES
Codford Parish Council: no response at time of writing

Archaeology Officer: no objection

Climate Officer: support the proposal in principle

Public Protection Officer: no objection

National Grid: There are no National Gas Transmission assets affected in this area

REPRESENTATIONS
None received

ASSESSMENT

The site
The site is located within the open countryside and accessed via Malmpit Hill. Codford is located approximately 2km to the southwest. The nearest residential properties are located a significant distance from the site (1.2km). The site consists of an existing biogas building, reception building, storage/digester tanks, gas holder, odour control unit, attenuation pond, feedstock buffer tank and 2 existing farm buildings. Existing woodland surrounds and screens the site. The site lies outside the Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The application
A renewable led energy station comprising of ground OFFTEM mounted photovoltaic solar arrays was approved to the north of the application site in 2014. This application sees the installation of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) consisting of 4no container units, which will connect to the existing sub-station and the transformer/inverter station which will store approximately 6-10 Mega Watts of energy. The containers will provide housing for battery infrastructure management systems, a power distribution system, and auxiliary systems such as fire suppression and alarm systems, ventilation and cooling system, internal lighting and thermal control systems. The site will be contained by fencing and secured by 2no. cctv posts. The proposed equipment, will be set adjacent to the existing woodland just outside of the existing glasshouse and solar panels areas and will be connected to the existing substation through underground cables.

Principle
Whilst not directly applicable to CP42 this proposal would be consistent with the policy aims and support should be given subject to consideration of the detailed criteria. Furthermore, the spatial objective of the development plan to address climate change supports this development. Increasing the proportion of energy that we consume from renewable sources will help to radically reduce greenhouse gas emissions, providing battery storage will be consistent with this. Therefore no objection in principle is raised.

Impact on the character of the area/ design of existing building
The location of the proposed units which will be green in colour and associated fencing will be adjacent to the existing woodland and the existing glasshouse which will reduce its impact upon the wider area. Views of the proposed containers will be minimal even from the nearby public rights of way as they would be against the existing glasshouse. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not have an adverse impact upon the wider area.

Archaeology

The footprint of the proposed development is located within a larger area that was the subject of the archaeological monitoring of groundworks in 2022. This monitoring recorded no archaeological features or deposits within the proposed development site, and as a result I would not wish to raise any further issues in this instance.

Impact on the living conditions of neighbouring residents
The site is located within the open countryside and approximately 1.2km from the nearest residential properties. There are no restrictions on operating times on the existing renewable infrastructure. Due to the separation distances it is considered that the proposal would have no harmful impact on the living conditions of adjacent residents.

Highway issues
There is an existing access road to the site as approved in previous applications. This road joins the plant access road and onto the A36 to the south at Codford, the access road was upgraded with passing places incorporated, to allow access to and from the site from the one existing roadway (the roadway is private and constructed to a specification to enable articulated lorries to access the site). All vehicular traffic enters the site from the A36. Once constructed the battery storage unit will have minimal vehicle requirements. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not lead to additional harm to highway safety.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE Subject to conditions

Conditions: (2)

1 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:
received on 30th August 2023: 01972-10 - B (container elevations)

received on 24th August 2023: 01972-00 - E (location plan), 01972-00 - E (proposed location plan),

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

2 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.