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Sent: 01 November 2022 17:03

To: Planning Enquiries <planning_enquiries@herefordshire.gov.uk>

Subject: 222728 - Planning application comment was submitted

The following is a comment on application **P222728/N** by '**Lesley Winters**'

Nature of feedback: objecting_to_the_application

Comment:

I am objecting to the Whitwick Manor AD planning application on a number of grounds:

1. Untested technology with a significant potential to worsen phosphate pollution Obviously, a solution is needed for the phosphate pollution in the Lugg and Wye catchment. However, this application for an anaerobic digester (AD) does not provide the solution. ADs do not remove phosphate which remains in the digestate and liquid waste. The industrial scale technologies proposed, to strip the nitrate and phosphate from the process, are untested, with no evidence they will work, especially at this scale. The application is to process chicken waste generated by Avara who admit they are responsible for at least 80% of the chicken waste in the Wye catchment. In 2001 Avara's parent company, Cargill, was sued by the US city of Tulsa (and settled out of court) so they have known for over twenty years about the pollution their chicken manure causes. It seems extraordinary that one of the largest agricultural companies in the world are now proposing to use untested technologies to strip the phosphates, with no evidence they will work at this scale.

2. Liquids (digestate) exiting the digester. The application claims that 'on average' up to 95% of phosphate in liquid leaving the digester will be then be removed by an alumina clay bed filter. However, this process is entirely unproven and the company which promotes the process says a 'treatability study' should be conducted to test the concept. P11 of CQA report in the supporting documents. This has not been done. Unknown figures. CQA, the company which has suggested the filtration concept, say the design was based on preliminary data of water quantity and composition and there was a 'level of variation and uncertainty about the data'. Wastewater characteristics must be confirmed before planning approval is given and thought given to the spikes and troughs which are the reality of waste water rather than averages. 5% phosphate remaining in waste water from AD will be more than legal minimum allowed. The 5% phosphate which may still remain will represent far more than the legal minimum allowed to enter the river catchment due to the quantities of chicken waste being processed. The application asks that this waste water may be discharged to a surface water course, subject to a discharge consent. Discharges to water courses must have zero phosphate levels to meet the Natural England phosphate moratorium.

3. Phosphate contaminated filter clay media It is proposed that the phosphate

is “filtered” by the alumina clay beds with the phosphate being retained by the clay medium. It seems that once exhausted, the clay medium will be excavated and spread on fields. The location is not specified. If the filter media is spread in the Wye catchment, the phosphate will make its way back into the river, meaning that there is no improvement and a great deal of exacerbation of the problem. I am deeply concerned that this application won't help the pollution problem and may actually make it significantly worse especially if the technologies do not work as claimed. We know the Environment Agency does not have the resources to properly monitor or enforce the impact of the proposal.

4. Phosphate monitoring. The CQA report also states that the inlet and outlet phosphorous levels should be monitored on a weekly basis or more frequently, as required. Given the many uncertainties and critical consequences of phosphorous contamination on the local habitat the phosphorous levels should not only be monitored and recorded continuously but should also be appropriately alarmed. In addition, the location of the outlet sample point(s) should be clearly defined.

5. Location versus planning policy: Siting industrial-scale waste disposal in open countryside is entirely contrary to national planning policy. This is not agricultural development, it a waste management development. The local development plan would direct it to one of the employment sites in the county. Rotherwas is designated in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan (MWLP) as the location for any waste management development.

6. Planning policy for ADs Furthermore MWLP the draft declares all new anaerobic digesters should only use feedstock from the farm they are on. I am deeply concerned that this application goes against all planning policy.

7. Vehicle movements The application states the AD will be using chicken waste and other agricultural products from across Herefordshire and possibly beyond. Grain, carbon dioxide and soil improvers will be exported. Therefore there will be approximately 1 additional vehicle movement every 4 minutes, half of which will be 30tonne HGVs, a further 30% will be 20tonne or tractors with trailers. There is no information provided in the application about which routes the traffic will take. However, it is probably an increase of 25% in local traffic. Road infrastructure throughout the area and buildings within the Stretton Grandison conservation area are already damaged by local HGV traffic. Significantly increased traffic is a major impact of this application.

8. Ammonia/ air pollution. The application considers only the air pollution from the AD itself. There is also the air pollution, especially ammonia, from the transportation of chicken muck and the storage and mixing of it onsite. This area is already 1.5 times over the recommended limit for ammonia. Ammonia is known to restrict the growth of some plants and also exacerbates human heart and lung conditions such as asthma. There are also the fumes from the HGVs and other vehicles themselves. Ashperton primary school and Townsend nursery are both sited next to the A417 - a major route to the proposed AD. I am very concerned about the impact of this proposed air

pollution.

9. Noise: There is a lot of noise generated by ADs beside additional traffic and potential gas flares – see point 10 and point 11. There is constant traffic within the site moving feedstock and digestate around, including the use of reversing beepers, the noise of the feedstock mixers and combined heat and power plants if they are used.

10. Noise from increased traffic. The application considers only the noise pollution from the AD itself. The noise impact of the increased traffic has been ignored. This much heavy traffic will contribute significantly to noise pollution in the area, especially as the AD is proposed to operate 6 days a week, 12 hours a day.

11. Noise from the methane flare The AD will produce methane which is proposed to be injected into a mains gas pipe near to the site (though again the technical details on this are lacking). When the methane is not pure enough or there is another technical problem, the methane will be flared off. As well as being a climate change nightmare and something that is normally seen at an oil rig, flares also produce a lot of noise.

12. This AD may become the 'waste management' site for new IPU applications within the Wye catchment. This has become the solution for all IPU applications in Powys, with one sending its manure to an AD in Whitchurch, Shropshire and another one sending it to the AD at Talgarth, the owners of which have been prosecuted for polluting the Llynfi

[REDACTED] up
[REDACTED]. Pollution incidents from ADs are commonplace. Such risks should have been addressed in the Environmental Statement. They have not.

13. Whose waste is this AD for? Is this AD purely for Avara's waste? It appears to be a significant understatement of the amount of waste generated by Avara. Could this AD attract chicken waste from outside the Wye catchment? An IPU planning application in Wales met the Habitats Regulations problems of manure disposal by saying the chicken waste would be sent to Gamber's AD on the English side of the border. (This case may be subject to a judicial review challenge). If the Welsh IPUs see the Whitwick AD as a solution for their waste, it may attract additional chicken waste into the Wye catchment. I am concerned that these important questions have not been addressed.

14. Future feedstocks for the AD. Will there continue to be as many chickens in the Wye catchment as there are now, especially in the light of avian flu controls and the rising costs of feeding and housing the birds? This AD could end up causing import of chicken muck from a wider and wider area, resulting in even more harm from transport. Alternatively, the AD could be switched to other feedstock such as maize which is well known for causing river pollution due to soil erosion. The Environment Agency will have no resources to be

able to enforce the feedstock mix. I am concerned that the proposal could end up worsening pollution in various unforeseen ways

Attachment:

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Infrastructure from Section 106 to consider:

Link Id:

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200142/planning_services/planning_application_search/details?id=222728

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