

Briefing 14: Northacre Renewable Energy Ltd

Permit Number: **EPR/CP3803LV/A001**

10 March 2022

Summary

- Northacre Renewable Energy Ltd (NREL) have applied for a permit from us to operate an Energy from Waste incinerator in Westbury.
- We closed our first public consultation on this permit application on 21 February 2021 and have been assessing the documents since then.
- We have carefully considered all of the documents provided to us by NREL, as well as your consultation comments, and cannot find any evidence that would cause us to refuse the permit application.
- We think we may grant the permit to Northacre Renewable Energy Ltd; this is called a 'minded to' decision.
- We have written a draft permit document and a draft decision document. We would like you to read them and send us your comments in our second consultation, **deadline Friday 22 April 11.59pm**.
- We will make our final decision once we have reviewed these comments.
- We received over 600 comments in our first consultation, and address the key issues that you raised in our draft decision document.

Introduction

We let you know on 26 February 2021 that our first public consultation had closed. You can view publicly available comments here: [Published responses for BA13 4WE, Northacre Renewable Energy Limited, EPR/CP3803LV/A001: environmental permit consultation - Environment Agency - Citizen Space \(environment-agency.gov.uk\)](https://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/citizen-space/consultations/BA13-4WE-NREL-EPR-CP3803LV-A001)

We have reviewed all the comments you sent us, along with the documents submitted by NREL, and have considered all the evidence very carefully. As part of this consideration, we have explored several issues of concern, such as the possibility of products from Arla Dairy becoming tainted by emissions from the incinerator. Concerns like these caused us to ask for more information from NREL, in the form of Schedule 5 notices, and when we received this information we made it available to you on our Citizen Space web portal.

We are now satisfied we have all the information we think we need and cannot find any reason to refuse this permit application. We are therefore now 'minded to' grant this permit to NREL.

This means we think we may grant the permit based on what we know so far, but we have yet to make a final decision. Before we do, we would like you to read our draft decision document and let us know if there is any further information you would like us to consider.

The draft documents

We have written two documents, the Draft Decision Document and the Draft Permit. The draft decision document explains our thought process and how we have taken on board the comments you sent us in the first consultation. The draft permit outlines the conditions the operator would have to meet.



In these documents we frequently say 'we have decided'. This gives the impression that our mind is already made up, but as we have explained above, we have not yet done so. The language enables them to become the final documents with no more re-drafting than is necessary.

How have we reached our decision so far?

We only issue new permits if we are satisfied that NREL has the appropriate systems in place to operate the incinerator without causing harm to the environment or human health.

We have checked that the operator will use appropriate preventative measures to monitor and control issues such as dust, noise or particulate emissions, so that no significant pollution is caused. In doing this we have reviewed how the site will be operated, and whether it will have any impact on people living nearby and natural habitats. We have also consulted with a wide number of partner organisations and the responses we received are included within the draft decision document.

We understand that this may not be the news you were hoping for. We are bound by the requirements of the [Regulator's Code](#) to grant permits to companies, provided we cannot find any evidence that the building or operation of such a site may cause significant harm to the environment or to human health. Wiltshire Council decide if the location is suitable for an incinerator and if such a facility is needed in Westbury through the planning application process.

The planning and permitting processes are separate from each other. A local authority can grant planning permission without an environmental permit in place and we can grant a permit without planning permission having been provided. We are aware that the planning permission decision is under review but this does not stop us making our decision regarding the permit.

We also understand that you may have concerns about the competence of the operators, due to the odour issues experienced by the Westbury community throughout 2021. This odour originated from the existing Mechanical and Biological Treatment (MBT) plant, which is operated by Hills Waste Solutions. The proposed incinerator, although partly funded by Hills, will be operated by Northacre Renewable Energy Ltd. This is a separate business and we must therefore treat their permit application completely separately to our regulation of the MBT plant; our decision cannot be influenced by other sites we regulate.

How can you comment on the consultation?

Our second consultation is now open and we invite you to comment on the draft decision document, draft permit and any other documents we have made available to you over the last year. You can do so by:

Visiting our online Citizen Space web page: <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/psc/ba13-4we-northacre-renewable-energy-limited-1>

Emailing us at: pscpublicresponse@environment-agency.gov.uk

Posting your response to us at: Environment Agency Permitting and Support Centre, Land Team, Quadrant 2, 99 Parkway Avenue, Sheffield, S9 4WF.

We welcome feedback from everyone who has a view on the application, regardless of their age, sex, disability, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity status, race, religion or belief or their sexual orientation.

We must receive your comments by 11:59pm on Friday 22nd April.



Please note that our permitting process does not take into account factors such as off-site vehicle movements, operating hours, visual impact and whether this is an appropriate location for the activity, as these are the local authority's responsibility to regulate.

What happens next?

We will consider all relevant comments we receive during this second consultation. Your comments may affect our decision so we will make our final decision once the consultation has closed and we will use your comments to inform us. You can let us know if you would like your comments to be made public when you submit your response on our Citizen Space consultation portal, or in the text of your email or letter.

Your comments will need to provide us with new information that would cause us to reconsider our decision. The information we are already aware of is outlined and considered in the draft decision document. If no new information comes to light, we will issue the permit to NREL after the close of the consultation.

How can I get further information?

Keep an eye on our local social media channels:

<https://twitter.com/EnvAgencySW>

<https://en-gb.facebook.com/environmentagencywessex/>

For more general information about our permitting process please see www.gov.uk/topic/environmental-management/environmental-permits

[Consultation responses: PSCpublicresponse@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:PSCpublicresponse@environment-agency.gov.uk)

If you would like to be added to or removed from our stakeholder database for this application, please email us at Wessex_engagement@environment-agency.gov.uk. Or write to us at Customer and Engagement Team, Rivers House, East Quay, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA6 4YS.

