

Planning application CCC/21/088/FUL – Envar Composting Ltd

Demolition of in-vessel compost buildings/tunnels and ancillary development; construction of a dry anaerobic digestion (AD) facility, pellet fertiliser facility, healthcare waste energy recovery facility, waste transfer station, vehicle re-fuelling station, biomass storage building, surface water storage lagoons, extension to concrete pad and ancillary development including car park

As well as planning permission, the proposed development would need an environmental permit from the Environment Agency in order to operate. The following paragraphs are a brief explanation of the regulatory context and the role of other public bodies.

The incineration process, and the emissions which incinerating waste releases into the air, are tightly regulated and controlled by laws under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED) and the Environmental Permitting Regulations (EPR) 2016. Under these European Directives, the plant must meet or go beyond strict controls on emissions. A plant must meet, or go beyond, best available techniques and emission standards, and human health and the environment must be protected. The link below explains how the emissions standards will continue to be applied following Brexit.

[Industrial emissions standards and best available techniques - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

When determining an application for an environmental permit the Environment Agency will take advice from Public Health England. In relation to the health implications of incinerators PHE first issued a statement in November 2005. This was as a result of concerns raised about the air pollution risks posed by municipal waste incinerators. More research on the possible air pollution risks posed by modern incinerators has been carried out since then and the latest guidance states that:

“PHE’s risk assessment remains that modern, well run and regulated municipal waste incinerators are not a significant risk to public health. While it is not possible to rule out adverse health effects from these incinerators completely, any potential effect for people living close by is likely to be very small.”

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/municipal-waste-incinerators-emissions-impact-on-health/phe-statement-on-modern-municipal-waste-incinerators-mwi-study>

As well as Public Health England, the Environment Agency consults the relevant local authorities and their health departments, the Food Standards Agency and the Health and Safety Executive. Public Health England assesses the potential public health impact of a proposed installation and makes recommendations based on a critical review of the information provided for the environmental permit application. They will request further information at the environmental permitting stage if they believe that this is necessary to be able to fully assess the likely public health impacts.

The Environment Agency's role is to make sure that energy from waste facilities are designed, built and run to meet legal environmental standards and to meet the

conditions of their environmental permit. If a permit were to be issued the Environment Agency would be the regulator for on-going compliance monitoring of the plant. They would only issue a permit if they were satisfied that the plant would be designed, built, operated and maintained in such a way that the requirements of the relevant EU Directives are met and that human health and the environment are protected.

To help the waste planning authority (Cambridgeshire County Council) assess the planning application we have consulted the Environment Agency, Public Health England, Huntingdonshire District Council's environmental health officer and the CCC Director of Public Health.

We must take into account the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) which at paragraph 188 states:

“The focus of planning policies and decisions should be on whether proposed development is an acceptable use of land, rather than the control of processes or emissions (where these are subject to separate pollution control regimes). Planning decisions should assume that these regimes will operate effectively. Equally, where a planning decision has been made on a particular development, the planning issues should not be revisited through the permitting regimes operated by pollution control authorities.”

County Planning, Minerals & Waste
13 August 2021