

Anaerobic Digestion Plan at Bressingham – Reference: 2022/1108
Message from South Norfolk MP Richard Bacon

I have been contacted by constituents who are very concerned that the previous application for an Anaerobic Digestion Plan at Bressingham (Reference 2021/2788) has been withdrawn and replaced with a new application (Reference 2022/1108).

A substantial response to the first planning application from more than 340 South Norfolk residents resulted in two robustly worded objections from Norfolk County Council Highways, a Flood Report objection, a Waveney Trust objection, together with due concerns from Natural England, Environmental Health and many more.

It therefore seems acutely unfair that by simply adjusting one obvious factor (that is, a reduction of feedstock going into the plant), the applicant is now allowed to resubmit a free full application and that as a result my constituents have to go through the whole process again – and this for a very big AD plant which has already been substantially constructed, without planning permission. I believe this takes “gaming of the planning process” to a new level and will add to the administrative burdens and costs for South Norfolk Council Tax payers.

This unauthorised AD plant - which I understand is twice the size of the original 2015 consented application – is having a detrimental and unacceptable impact on the local landscape and environment and the rural communities that surround it. The local roads, many of which are very narrow, poorly constructed and which are designated as “Quiet Lanes”, will not cope with the increased traffic, given that there would be large heavy vehicles presenting serious hazards for pedestrians, cyclists, and all other road users.

My understanding is that on the 2nd March 2022 NCC Highways objected to the application and recommended “*refusal without hesitation*”, stating serious concerns for “*other road users, including vulnerable users*”. This objection was reiterated on the 5th May.

Reducing the feedstock allowance in order to reduce traffic movements without enforcing the reduction in size of this construction does not make sense; and if planning consent were granted, it would open up the possibility of “development creep” and a gradual uplift in the throughput of feedstock later on. The consequential growth in traffic movements would thus intensify and exacerbate the current situation on these lanes, potentially leading to hazardous manoeuvres and becoming even more dangerous for local residents. I am sure that maintaining the reduced feedstock limit would also be very difficult and costly for the council to monitor accurately.

My constituents express a genuine sense of unfairness and anger over the roughshod manner in which they feel they have been treated. I believe that a people-centred approach to alternative energy development would make far more sense. ‘If you want development to be a good word, then you have to have good development’. This construction clearly is not that.

Given the scale of objection and local strength of feeling over this unapproved construction I would request the council to refuse the application.

Yours sincerely
Richard Bacon
MP for South Norfolk