

## Permitting Decisions- Variation

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We have decided to grant the variation and partial surrender for Sandhill Biogas Plant operated by GWE Biogas Ltd.

The variation number is EPR/TP3835KE/V012.

The permit was issued on 20/02/2026.

The variation is for the installation of a new digestate storage lagoon (Kirkburn 2), re-use of the existing storage digestate lagoon (Kirkburn 1) and inclusion of both lagoons and underground transfer pipework. The application is also a partial surrender of the access road and the extension of the site boundary to include the underground transfer pipework and digestate storage lagoons. The variation is also for the change of wording in the permit status log, from low temperature emergency flare to high temperature emergency flare.

We consider in reaching that decision we have taken into account all relevant considerations and legal requirements and that the permit will ensure that the appropriate level of environmental protection is provided.

### **Purpose of this document**

This decision document provides a record of the decision-making process. It summarises the decision-making process to show how the main relevant factors have been taken into account. We have assessed the aspects that are changing as part of this variation and part surrender, we have not revisited any other sections of the permit.

Unless the decision document specifies otherwise, we have accepted the applicant's proposals.

Read the permitting decisions in conjunction with the environmental permit and the variation notice.

## **Decision considerations**

### **Confidential information**

A claim for commercial or industrial confidentiality has not been made.

The decision was taken in accordance with our guidance on confidentiality.

### **Identifying confidential information**

We have not identified information provided as part of the application that we consider to be confidential.

The decision was taken in accordance with our guidance on confidentiality.

### **The site**

The extent of the facility has changed as a result of the partial surrender. The operator has provided a plan which we consider to be satisfactory. These show the extent of the site of the facility.

The plans show the location of the part of the installation to which this permit applies on that site.

The plan is included in the permit.

### **Extent of the surrender application**

The operator has provided a plan showing the extent of the site of the facility that is to be surrendered. We consider this plan to be satisfactory.

### **Site condition report**

The operator has provided a description of the condition of the site, which we consider is satisfactory. The decision was taken in accordance with our guidance on site condition reports.

### **Nature conservation, landscape, heritage and protected species and habitat designations**

We have checked the location of the application to assess if it is within the screening distances we consider relevant for impacts on nature conservation, landscape, heritage and protected species and habitat designations. The application is not within our screening distances for these designations.

## **Environmental risk**

We have reviewed the operator's assessment of the environmental risk from the facility. The operator's risk assessment is satisfactory.

## **General operating techniques**

We have reviewed the techniques used by the operator and compared these with the relevant guidance notes and we consider them to represent appropriate techniques for the facility.

The relevant guidance notes are as follows:

- Biological waste treatment: appropriate measures for permitted facilities, 21 September 2022, GOV.UK
- Best available techniques (BAT) for Waste Treatment as detailed in document reference 2010/75/EU
- Best Available Techniques (BAT) Conclusions for Waste Treatment as detailed in document reference C (2018) 5070

The operating techniques that the applicant must use are specified in table S1.2 in the environmental permit.

## **National Air Pollution Control Programme**

We have considered the National Air Pollution Control Programme as required by the National Emissions Ceilings Regulations 2018. By setting emission limit values in line with technical guidance we are minimising emissions to air. This will aid the delivery of national air quality targets. We do not consider that we need to include any additional conditions in this permit.

## **Odour management**

We have reviewed the odour management plan in accordance with our guidance on odour management.

We consider that the odour management plan is satisfactory and we approve this plan.

We have approved the odour management plan as we consider it to be appropriate measures based on information available to us at the current time. The applicant should not take our approval of this plan to mean that the measures in the plan are considered to cover every circumstance throughout the life of the permit.

The applicant should keep the plans under constant review and revise them annually or if necessary sooner if there have been complaints arising from

operations on site or if circumstances change. This is in accordance with our guidance 'Control and monitor emissions for your environmental permit'.

## **Waste types**

We have specified the permitted waste types, descriptions and quantities, which can be accepted at the regulated facility.

We are satisfied that the operator can accept these wastes for the following reasons:

- they are suitable for the proposed activities
- the proposed infrastructure is appropriate; and
- the environmental risk assessment is acceptable.

We have excluded the following wastes due to the revised anaerobic digestate resource framework published in October 2025:

- 02 03 02 – wastes from preserving agents
- 04 01 01 – fleshings and lime split waste
- 04 01 05 – tanning liquor free of chromium
- 04 01 07 – sludges not containing chromium
- 07 02 13 – waste plastic
- 15 01 02 – plastic packaging – compostable plastics only certified to EN 13432 or equivalent certified compostable or digestible standard
- 20 01 38 – untreated wood where no non-biodegradable coating or preserving substance is present

## **Pre-operational conditions**

Based on the information in the application, we consider that we need to include pre-operational conditions.

We have included a pre-operational condition for future development (Table S1.4) which requires the submission of a report confirming that the construction and integrity of the new and existing digestate storage tank is fit for purpose and in accordance with industry standards prior to its use. This will ensure that the lagoons are properly designed to prevent the risks of accidents and their consequences.

## **Emission limits**

No emission limits have been added, amended or deleted as a result of this variation.

## **Growth duty**

We have considered our duty to have regard to the desirability of promoting economic growth set out in section 108(1) of the Deregulation Act 2015 and the guidance issued under section 110 of that Act in deciding whether to grant this permit variation.

Paragraph 1.3 of the guidance says:

“The primary role of regulators, in delivering regulation, is to achieve the regulatory outcomes for which they are responsible. For a number of regulators, these regulatory outcomes include an explicit reference to development or growth. The growth duty establishes economic growth as a factor that all specified regulators should have regard to, alongside the delivery of the protections set out in the relevant legislation.”

We have addressed the legislative requirements and environmental standards to be set for this operation in the body of the decision document above. The guidance is clear at paragraph 1.5 that the growth duty does not legitimise non-compliance and its purpose is not to achieve or pursue economic growth at the expense of necessary protections.

We consider the requirements and standards we have set in this permit are reasonable and necessary to avoid a risk of an unacceptable level of pollution. This also promotes growth amongst legitimate operators because the standards applied to the operator are consistent across businesses in this sector and have been set to achieve the required legislative standards.