

## Permitting Decisions - Variation

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We have decided to issue the variation for Wellington Farm operated by Brackley Farms Limited.

The variation number is EPR/DP3240QK/V003.

The variation was issued on 08/06/2026.

The variation is for the addition of a Small Waste Incineration Plant (SWIP) burning waste wood. The plant is existing and currently burns poultry litter and the operator has applied to change the fuel to waste wood, making it a SWIP.

There are no changes to the intensive farming activity as a result of this variation.

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

- highlights key issues in the determination
- summarises the decision making process in the decision considerations section to show how the main relevant factors have been taken into account
- shows how we have considered the consultation responses.

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.

# Key issues of the decision

## Regulated Activity

The change in fuel from poultry litter to classes A to C waste wood means that the plant becomes a SWIP in accordance with Schedule 13 of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 and Chapter IV of the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED) applies. Although the local authority is usually the regulator of SWIPs, because the SWIP will be providing heat to the regulated activities it is directly associated, so the Environment Agency becomes the regulator.

## Air impact assessment

### Impacts from ammonia

The applicant did not assess emissions of ammonia as abatement of NOx emissions is not proposed as the applicant considers that the emission limits for NOx will not be breached. We agreed with this assumption and considered that ammonia will not be emitted from the SWIP so there will be no increase in the ammonia emissions from the site as a whole.

### Impacts from the SWIP

The main impacts from the SWIP are emissions of flue gas to atmosphere. The applicant has provided an air emissions impact assessment based on air dispersion modelling in accordance with our guidance [Environmental permitting: air dispersion modelling reports](#) and has assessed the impact of relevant substances on both human and ecological receptors.

The applicant's air dispersion modelling is set out in 'Air quality assessment to support a permit variation for a Small Waste Incineration Plant, Wing Complex, Buckinghamshire', dated 6<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

The applicant modelled the dispersion of the substances at the emission limits as set out in Part 3 of Annex VI of the IED and compared the process contributions (PC) to the relevant environmental standards (ES) at human and ecological receptors. Where the PC is less than 1% or less than 10% of the long or short term ES, it is considered that the emissions are insignificant. For ancient woodlands and local wildlife sites, the PC is insignificant where it is less than 100% of the relevant ES. Where they are not insignificant the applicant is required to consider the background concentration and add it to the PC. This Predicted Environmental Concentration (PEC) is then compared to the ES to determine whether it exceeds the ES.

The applicant reported the maximum PC across the area modelled and the results showed that some of the substances were insignificant. For those that were not, the applicant modelled emissions at the human health receptors and determined that the PECs were less than 100% of the relevant standards and concluded that there would be no impact on human health.

The applicant modelled Total Organic Carbon (TOC) as benzene in accordance with our guidance. However, as the types of waste wood proposed to be accepted are likely to be coated with paints and varnishes, it is considered that some TOC could comprise 1,3, butadiene which has a much lower ES than that for benzene. We asked the applicant to compare this pollutant against the 1,3, butadiene ES at the human health receptors as comparison of the maximum PC within the modelled area was 107% of the ES. The applicant's modelling showed that the PECs at the receptors were below the ES. On the basis that the modelling was carried out assuming emissions are always at the emission limit and that all the TOC would be the more sensitive 1,3, butadiene, both of which are unlikely to occur in practice, the applicant concluded that it would be unlikely for the ES to be exceeded.

The applicant carried out a human health risk assessment for dioxins, furans and dioxin-like PCBs and determined that the maximum predicted concentration of inhaled dioxins is 0.7% of the tolerable daily intake.

The applicant identified the following ecological receptors within 2km of the biomass stack:

- Blackend Spinney Ancient Woodland (AW)
- Un-named AW
- Warren Farm Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

In addition, we identified the following ecological receptors within 2km of the biomass stack:

- Burcott Lodge Farm (wetland) Local Wildlife Site (LWS)
- Meadow West of Burcott LWS
- Wet Meadow, Wing LWS

The applicant excluded the Warren Farm SSSI as a receptor for air emissions as it is a site of geological interest and its features are not impacted by emissions to air.

The applicant predicted the following PCs at the ancient woodlands considered:

<b>Table 1: Predicted maximum ground level concentrations at Blackend Spinney AW</b>						
<b>Pollutant</b>	<b>EQS / EAL (µg/m³)</b>	<b>Back-ground (µg/m³)</b>	<b>Process Contribution (PC) (µg/m³)</b>	<b>PC as % of EQS / EAL</b>	<b>Predicted Environmental Concentration (PEC) (µg/m³)</b>	<b>PEC as % EQS / EAL</b>
Direct Impacts <sup>1</sup>						
NO <sub>x</sub> Annual	30	-	0.2	0.6	-	-
NO <sub>x</sub> Daily Mean	75	-	1.3	2	-	-
SO <sub>2</sub> Annual	20	-	0.05	0.3	-	-
HF Daily Mean	5	-	0.03	0.1	-	-
HF Weekly Mean	0.5	-	0.01	2	-	-
Deposition Impacts <sup>1</sup>						
N Deposition (kg N/ha/yr)	10	-	0.036	0.4	-	-
Acidification - Nitrogen Dep (Keq/ha/yr)	10.855	-	0.0168	0.1	-	-
Note 1: Direct impact units are µg/m³ and deposition impact units are kg N/ha/yr or Keq/ha/yr.						

<b>Table 2: Predicted maximum ground level concentrations at Un-named AW</b>						
<b>Pollutant</b>	<b>EQS / EAL (µg/m³)</b>	<b>Back-ground (µg/m³)</b>	<b>Process Contribution (PC) (µg/m³)</b>	<b>PC as % of EQS / EAL</b>	<b>Predicted Environmental Concentration (PEC) (µg/m³)</b>	<b>PEC as % EQS / EAL</b>
Direct Impacts <sup>1</sup>						
NO <sub>x</sub> Annual	30	-	0.3	1.0	-	-
NO <sub>x</sub> Daily Mean	75	-	4.4	6	-	-
SO <sub>2</sub> Annual	20	-	0.08	0.4	-	-
HF Daily Mean	5	-	0.09	1.8	-	-
HF Weekly Mean	0.5	-	0.028	5.6	-	-
Deposition Impacts <sup>1</sup>						
N Deposition (kg N/ha/yr)	10	-	0.0627	0.6	-	-
Acidification - Nitrogen Dep (Keq/ha/yr)	8.616	-	0.0312	0.3	-	-
Note 1: Direct impact units are µg/m³ and deposition impact units are kg N/ha/yr or Keq/ha/yr.						

All emissions were less than the relevant critical levels and loads at the receptors and the applicant concluded the impact is acceptable.

We reviewed the modelling and carried out checks on the emission rates and other inputs to the model. We agreed with the inputs used in the model, with the exception of that for TOC as discussed above and accepted the results of the modelling. We checked the PCs at the additional ecological receptors, and these were all less than 100% of the relevant critical levels and loads.

We consider that the emissions are insignificant or are unlikely to breach the ES at either the human health or ecological receptors. We consider the human health risk assessment demonstrates a low risk to human health from dioxins, furans and dioxin-like PCBs.

The impacts of nitrogen and acid deposition from the SWIP are insignificant at the relevant ecological receptors. Therefore, it is considered that the relevant ES at these receptors will not be breached as a result of the cumulative emissions from the SWIP and the farming activities.

## **Decision considerations**

### **Confidential information**

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

### **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.

### **Consultation**

The consultation requirements were identified in accordance with the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations (2016) and our public participation statement.

The comments and our responses are summarised in the [consultation responses](#) section.

The application was publicised on the GOV.UK website.

We consulted the following organisations:

- Buckinghamshire County Council Director of Public Health
- Food Standards Agency
- UK Health Security Agency
- Buckinghamshire County Council Environmental Health

The comments and our responses are summarised in the [consultation responses](#) section.

## **The regulated facility**

We considered the extent and nature of the facility in accordance with RGN2 'Understanding the meaning of regulated facility', Appendix 1 of RGN 2 'Interpretation of Schedule 1' and Appendix 2 of RGN2 'Defining the scope of the installation'.

The activity being added to the permit is a SWIP under Schedule 13 of the EPR 2016 which is regulated by the local authority. However, as the SWIP is providing heat to the activity listed under Schedule 1 of the EPR 2016 and has a technical connection to it, the activity is considered to be a directly associated activity and falls under regulation by the Environment Agency in the installation permit.

The extent of the facility is defined in the site plan and in the permit. The activities are defined in table S1.1 of the permit.

## **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, protected species and habitat designations. The application is within our screening distances for these designations.

We have assessed the application and its potential to affect sites of nature conservation, landscape, heritage, protected species and habitat designations identified in the nature conservation screening report as part of the permitting process.

We consider that the application will not affect any site of nature conservation, landscape and heritage, and/or protected species or habitats identified – see Key issues above.

We have not consulted Natural England. The decision was taken in accordance with our guidance.

## **Environmental risk**

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

There is no increase in odour or noise as a result of the change in fuel. However, there is the potential for emissions of dust due to the storage and handling of the waste wood used for fuel (see Dust Management section).

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 note and we consider them to represent appropriate techniques for the facility.

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.

## **Fire prevention plan**

We have assessed the fire prevention plan and are satisfied that it meets the measures and objectives set out in the Fire Prevention Plan guidance.

We have approved the fire prevention 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 plan has been incorporated into the operating techniques table S1.2 of the environmental permit.

## **Dust management**

We have reviewed the dust and emission management plan in accordance with our guidance on emissions management plans for dust.

We have approved the dust and emission management plan relating to the storage and management of waste wood 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'.

Although we have approved the dust management plan submitted with this application, we have set an improvement condition to require the operator to produce a dust management plan for the facility as a whole which covers both the farming and incineration activities.

The plan has been incorporated into the operating techniques table S1.2 of the environmental permit.

## **Updating permit conditions during consolidation**

We have updated permit conditions to those in the current generic permit template as part of permit consolidation. The conditions will provide the same level of protection as those in the previous permit.

## **Raw materials**

We have specified limits and controls on the use of raw materials and fuels.

We have specified that gas oil, or an equivalent substitute fuel subject to Environment Agency approval, must not have a sulphur content that exceeds 0.1% sulphur.

## **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.

## **Pre-operational conditions**

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

We have added a number of pre-operational conditions in line with those for incineration plant. These include:

- a requirement to provide a protocol for sampling and testing of bottom ash;
- a commissioning plan, to include expected emissions and the actions to be taken to protect the environment during commissioning;
- an assessment to confirm the SWIP can be operated to meet the temperature and retention time requirements;
- a report detailing the arrangement for monitoring locations and techniques to demonstrate they are in accordance with our guidance; and
- provision of a methodology for verifying the temperature and residence time and emissions under different operating loads.

## **Improvement programme**

Based on the information in the application, we consider that we need to include an improvement programme.

We have included an improvement programme in line with that with other incineration plant and for site specific reasons. These include:

- a requirement for a combined Dust Management Plan to cover all activities at the site (farming and SWIP);
- proposals for carrying out testing to determine particle size distribution in the exhaust gases;
- provision of a report on the commissioning of the SWIP;
- provision of a report with the actual temperature and residence time in the furnace;
- provision of a report describing the performance and optimisation of the abatement equipment;
- provision of a report detailing the performance of the continuous emissions monitors including calibration and testing; and
- a requirement to assess that the monitoring locations meet the standards.

## **Emission limits**

Emission Limit Values (ELVs) based on Part 3 of Annex VI of the IED have been added for the following substances:

- Particulate matter
- Total organic carbon
- Hydrogen chloride
- Hydrogen fluoride
- Carbon monoxide
- Sulphur dioxide
- Oxides of nitrogen
- Total cadmium and thallium and their compounds
- Mercury and its compounds
- Total Antimony, Arsenic, Lead, Chromium, Cobalt, Copper, Manganese, Nickel and Vanadium and their compounds
- Carbon dioxide
- Dioxins / furans
- Dioxin like PCBs
- Poly-cyclic aromatic hydrocarbons

We set these limits in line with Part 3 of Annex VI of the IED as these are the parameters and limits required by the IED in relation to incineration plant that are subject to Chapter IV of the IED.

## Monitoring

We have decided that monitoring should be added for the following parameters, using the methods detailed and to the frequencies specified in table S3.1 of the permit:

- Particulate matter
- Total organic carbon
- Hydrogen chloride
- Hydrogen fluoride
- Carbon monoxide
- Sulphur dioxide
- Oxides of nitrogen
- Total cadmium and thallium and their compounds
- Mercury and its compounds
- Total Antimony, Arsenic, Lead, Chromium, Cobalt, Copper, Manganese, Nickel and Vanadium and their compounds
- Carbon dioxide
- Dioxins / furans
- Dioxin like PCBs
- Poly-cyclic aromatic hydrocarbons
- Exhaust gas pressure, temperature, oxygen content, water vapour content, flow

These monitoring requirements have been included in accordance with Part 6 of Annex VI of the IED to enable the operator to demonstrate compliance with the emission limits and confirm that the air quality risk assessment submitted with the application is valid.

The operator had requested periodic monitoring of Hydrogen chloride, Hydrogen fluoride and Sulphur dioxide. However, no appropriate justification to demonstrate that the limits would never be reached was provided. The IED allows for periodic monitoring to take place if the wastes accepted can be shown to not contain Chlorine, Fluorine or Sulphur. Based on the proposed wastes, it is likely that these substances will be contained in the waste wood given that the wood is classes A to C which include waste wood that is contaminated and treated. In addition, the operator is proposing to abate acid gases using a lime injection system, which suggest that these pollutants are expected. Therefore, in line with the IED and the SWIP technical guidance we have set continuous monitoring for Hydrogen chloride and Sulphur dioxide, but allowed Hydrogen fluoride to be monitored periodically as Hydrogen chloride is monitored continuously.

Based on the information in the application we are satisfied that the operator's techniques, personnel and equipment have either MCERTS certification or MCERTS accreditation as appropriate.

## Reporting

We have added reporting in the permit for the following parameters:

- Parameters listed in the Monitoring section above
- Process monitoring parameters specified in table S3.4 of the permit
- LOI, metals and their compounds, dioxins/furans and dioxin-like PCBs in bottom ash and the APC residues
- Total soluble fractions and soluble metals in bottom ash and the APC residues
- Total waste incinerated
- Electricity, thermal energy produced
- Electricity, thermal energy used on site
- Performance parameters specified in table S4.3 of the permit

We made these decisions in accordance with the requirements of Chapter IV of the IED, so that the operator can demonstrate compliance with emission limits and that the operator can demonstrate to performance of the SWIP.

## Management system

We are not aware of any reason to consider that the operator will not have the management system to enable it to comply with the permit conditions.

The decision was taken in accordance with the guidance on operator competence and how to develop a management system for environmental permits.

## **Financial competence**

There is no known reason to consider that the operator will not be financially able to comply with the permit conditions.

## **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.

## **Consultation Responses**

The following summarises the responses to consultation with other organisations, our notice on GOV.UK for the public and the way in which we have considered these in the determination process.

We did not receive any representations from members of the public.

## Responses from organisations listed in the consultation section

Response received from UK Health Security Agency

Brief summary of issues raised:

The main emissions of potential public health significance are emissions into the air of bioaerosols, dust including particulate matter and ammonia. The nearest receptors are within 100m of the site. The composition of products of combustion will change with the change to burning of wood waste and the quantity of unburnt poultry litter will increase.

UKHSA assumes the disposal of the unburnt poultry litter will be regulated if appropriate under the existing Environmental Permit conditions. UKHSA is reassured that abatement measures outlined within the permit documentation will help reduce emissions to air from site processes and minimise public health impacts.

Summary of actions taken:

The applicant has assessed the emissions to air from burning waste wood and considers that there will not be a breach of the ES at the receptors. We have reviewed the air impact assessment and agree with the applicant's conclusions. As the applicant is not fitting abatement of NO<sub>x</sub>, which uses an ammonia-based reagent, there will not be an increase in ammonia emissions from the site as a whole. See Key Issues section.

Management of poultry litter will not change, except that all waste litter will be removed from the site.

Response received from Buckinghamshire Council Environment & Commercial Environmental Health Team

Brief summary of issues raised:

It is not clear if the waste wood is to be burnt separately or alternatively to the poultry manure, and it is felt that co-burning will result in significant ash tonnage and the collection and storage does not appear to have been given much consideration. It is unclear why waste wood is to be burnt given there is ample supply of poultry litter.

Request that reporting of emissions takes place twice yearly on the basis that the furnace is old. The temperature and retention times should be recorded automatically. Request that emissions of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and

particulates are measured at least annually and, if no abatement equipment is provided, continuously.

Concern that importation of waste wood will result in HGV movements which could cause noise, dust, congestion so, where necessary, request that appropriate restrictions are placed on annual HGV movements.

Summary of actions taken:

In the response dated 01/05/2026 to our schedule 5 notice dated 02/04/2026 the operator clarified that only waste wood will be burnt.

The operator is required to submit a methodology to verify the residence time and temperature of the gases in the furnace in accordance with pre-operational measure 6 in table S1.4 of the permit prior to commencement of commissioning of the plant. During commissioning of the plant, the operator is required in accordance with improvement condition IC7 in table S1.3 of the permit to undertake a site specific assessment of residence time and temperature when operating under the most unfavourable conditions and report the outcomes. In addition, temperature of the flue gas is required to be monitored continuously.

Monitoring for a variety of parameters including oxides of nitrogen and particulate matter is required to be carried out continuously. Abatement equipment to reduce particulates and acid gases will be installed. Reporting of monitoring of emissions to air is required quarterly.

Movement of traffic to and from the Installation is outside of our remit but will normally be an issue for the planning authority to consider.