

BRACKLEY TOWN COUNCIL

20 High Street, Brackley, Northants NN13 7DS

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To: Councillors Bagot-Webb (Chair), Baker, Kew, King, Langford, Manley, Nash, Watt, Weaver, E Wiltshire and P Wiltshire.

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **Planning & General Works Committee** to be held on **Monday 3 February 2025** following the Full Council meeting in Brackley Town Hall, Market Place, NN13 7AB.

29 January 2025



Town Clerk

AGENDA

Members of the Press and Public are invited to attend

379/24 Apologies for Absence

Members are asked to receive, and if appropriate, approve apologies

380/24 Declaration of interest

Members are asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests in items on the agenda, **and the nature of that interest**, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, the Brackley Town Council Code of Conduct and Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

381/24 Public participation

This section of the meeting gives members of the public who are present an opportunity to speak. You may speak on any item which appears on the agenda for this evening's meeting. The session will last for a maximum of 15 minutes with any individual contribution lasting a maximum of 3 minutes. Members of the public should address their representations through the Chair of the meeting.

382/24 Minutes

Members are asked to receive and approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 January 2025.

Recommendation – to approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 January 2025.

383/24 Planning Applications

To consider planning applications as outlined on the attached schedule. Comments will be submitted.

Please note, this is a public meeting, and you may be filmed, recorded and published. Copies of all council papers are available to download at: www.brackleynorthants-tc.gov.uk

384/24 Land to the West of the A43 Buckingham Road, Evenley NN13 5GH - attached

[Planning application: 2024/5352/MAF - Planning register | Planning register | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

Brackley Town Council is not on the consultee list for the above application.

From PGW Meeting on 5 September 2022 the following was agreed:

On the proposition of Cllr Kew, it was **RESOLVED** to submit the following comments:

- The site is not in the minerals and waste plan.
- Anglian Water AND Thames Water – should they be a consultee?
- The transport figures are grossly underestimated
- Gas to Banbury so Northamptonshire residents will not benefit from this site
- Smells will come Brackley way if the wind shifts.
- The proposed new access is going to be on the same road and close to the new access to Croughton.
- Transport route – A422? This has not been addressed in the application.

Attached to the agenda is the letter of objection from Evenley Parish Council for members' information.

Members' instruction is requested.

385/24 Matters for Information

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Minutes of the **Planning & General Works Committee** held on **Monday 20 January 2025** in Brackley Town Hall, Market Place, NN13 7AB.

Present: Councillors Bagot-Webb (Chair), Kew, Langford, Manley, Nash, Weaver, E Wiltshire and P Wiltshire.

Officers: Deputy Town Clerk

345/24 Apologies for Absence

Apologies received and accepted from Cllrs Baker, King and Watt.

346/24 Declaration of interest

None

347/24 Public participation

None

348/24 Minutes

On the proposition of Cllr P Wiltshire, it was **RESOLVED** to:
approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 January 2025.

349/24 Planning Applications

Members considered the planning applications as outlined on the attached schedule. Comments will be submitted.

350/24 Appeal under section 78 Town and Country Planning Act 1990

[Planning application: 2024/2248/FULL - Planning register | Planning register | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

Members agreed that the previous comments on this application still stand.

351/24 Matters for Information

None.

Meeting closed at 19.11

Signed:

Dated:

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Application Number	Closing Date	Location	Proposal	Town Council Comments
2025/0157/TCA	03/02/25	Shrubbery Cottage, Pebble Lane, Brackley, NN13 7DA	Removal of 6 x Holly Bushes, 1 x Yew Hedge Removal of 1 x Ivy covered galvanised fence	Comment – disappointed that the bushes are going without any apparent reason – the fence and hedge are not intrinsic to each other.
2025/0158/TPO	03/02/25	Shrubbery Cottage, Pebble Lane, Brackley, NN13 7DA	Pollard of 1 x Lime Tree TPO: 08/1985	Support

Please Ctrl + click on the blue application number to follow the link to the application

Application Number	Closing Date	Location	Proposal	Town Council Comments
2025/0122/FULL	05/02/25	6 Bridgewater Close, Brackley, NN13 6DE	A single storey front extension to provide accessible bedroom.	
2024/4087/ADV	13/02/2025	33 Market Place Brackley NN13 7AB	Advertisement consent for replacement shop front and signage	
2024/4088/FULL	13/02/2025	33 Market Place Brackley NN13 7AB	Replacement shop front and signage	
2025/0145/FULL	07/02/2025	8 Nether Close Brackley NN13 7BP	Demolition of garage and erection of single storey side extension.	
2025/0338/TPO	17/02/25	141 Banbury Road Brackley NN13 6AX	Pollarding of 1 x Horse Chestnut Tree TPO: 11/1986	

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West Northamptonshire Council
SN Area Office, The Forum
Moat Lane, Towcester
Northants, NN12 6AD

23rd January 2025

Dear Mr Bains,

Evenley Parish Council strongly objects to planning application 2024/5352/MAF, submitted by Acorn Bioenergy Ltd (Acorn), which proposes the construction of one of the UK's largest anaerobic digester plants which will operate 24 hours a day and process 82,950 tonnes of mixed waste and crops here within the parish of Evenley.

Our objections are as follows:

Previous Refusal

Acorn's previous application for a biodigester plant for this site was refused by West Northamptonshire Council in December 2023. The Council determined that:

"The scale, height, and massing of the proposed development will not minimise the adverse impacts on people and the natural environment. As such, it will have an unacceptable impact on the landscape character of the surrounding area."

Despite Acorn's claims of addressing these concerns, the current application leaves the majority of the issues unresolved and in instances the impacts are in fact far worse.

Scale, Height and Massing

The scale, height and massing is larger: in this application the site this industrial plant occupies has increased from 8.98 hectares to 10.3 hectares, while the height of its digesters has been reduced by a mere half a metre. The plant, located on a rise just 300m away from several family-occupied residential properties will overbear those homes by a huge 16.5m (54ft) - that the height of four double-deckers. Its 'chicken muck' shed is a vast 694m² building which is 13m (43ft) high. This plant remains industrial in scale and massing. Acorn agrees and determines it as such in point 5.6 of its access and design statement where it calls it class B2 'General Industrial'.

In its design and access statement, Acorn suggests its AD facility would be screened by bunds, tree and other planting to reduce its visibility. Under 'Landscaping Mitigation' point 6.5 it states that 'The mitigation from the previous application is enhanced with some additional tree planting...'. EPC asks whether 'some additional tree planting' can screen what will be one of the largest biodigester plants in the UK. Any planting will require minimum 10-15 years to prove effective and screening 16.5m with planting is simply not possible. There are no other biodigesters of this scale built on greenfield land at present; one of the largest, run by Biffa Ltd, processes 120,000 tonnes at the biodigester located on its landfill site in Staffordshire while ReFood Ltd processes 160,000 tonnes at sites in London, Widnes and Doncaster which are all industrial locations.

Rural Location

The location is rural. It is green agricultural land surrounded by open countryside dotted with private homes. It is just 300m from residential properties at Barley Mow, 700m from Slade Farm properties and just 1.4km from the village of Evenley.

No consideration has been given to the effect this plant operating 24 hours a day, with the additional noise, light pollution, traffic, dust and odour will have on the amenity of the families living within close proximity of this industrial plant.

Policy SS2 of South Northamptonshire Part Two Local Plan explicitly states new developments must 'not unacceptably harm the amenity of occupiers and users of neighbouring properties and the area'. Evenley Parish Council (EPC) believes this application should be rejected on this consideration alone.

Waste/Industrial Location?

The location has not been identified in the WNC Local Plan for industrial development and as previously stated Acorn itself identifies this plant as class B2 General Industrial Development site

Acorn argues in its application that this is not a waste site, but it will accept chicken slurry and farm manure and has a designated 13m high 'chicken muck' shed. Processing chicken slurry requires a waste code. Waste Classification: Guidance on the classification and assessment of waste (1st Edition v1.2.GB), under Appendix A1.1 List of Waste chapters, A10, lists code 02 for 'Wastes for agriculture, horticulture, aquaculture, forestry, hunting and fishing, food preparation and processing. Specifically, it offers 020106 for animal faeces, urine and manure (including spoiled straw), effluent, collected separately and treated off-site, whilst under codes 0202 wastes from the preparation and processing of meat, fish and other foods of animal origin 020204 is offered for sludges from on-site effluent treatment.

Acorn later suggests (design and access statement 7 Planning Context) that 'Whilst the AD facility is not a waste management facility, part of the feedstock would comprise dairy slurry, chicken litter and farmyard manure, therefore the relevant policies of the Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2017 have been taken into account. Later it argues that 'Whilst some waste management activities will be undertaken.... (it) will not be a waste management facility. Indeed it states itself that 30 per cent of material processed will comprise waste. If the materials being processed at this industrial plant are classified wastes this plant needs to be regulated by the UK's stringent waste management regulations to prevent harm to people and the environment.

The location does appear in Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (the Local Plan), policy 1.17 which states 'For waste this includes specific industrial locations...'. Evenley is not listed as an industrial location. Neither is it in the designated area of growth, set out in policy 2.18 or in North Northamptonshire as specified in 2.23.

Policy 5.39 NMWLP 'requires primary and advanced waste management facilities locations where investment can be optimised and sustainable development can occur'. It asks that 'The key driver for the location of these facilities will be their relationship to what this Local Plan defines as Northamptonshire's central spine' This is a greenfield site and Evenley is not within the Northamptonshire central spine as proposed in the Local Plan.

Again policy 6.16 states that 'It is important to protect the county's landscapes for the sake of their intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of wildlife, as well as the wealth of their natural resources. Once lost such features can be difficult to re-create.' EPC believes this plant will cause considerable harm to its parish's landscape.

EPC urges the planning officer and WNC's Large Projects department to determine this application as a waste management plant.

Odour Issues & Air Quality

The heart of the village of Evenley comprising some 20 listed buildings is just 1.4km away. Because of the height of the land here, south-westerly winds are prevalent. This proposed site would be immediately downwind of the heart of this heritage village. Residents here are extremely concerned about the effect of odour and noise, which is a well-documented problem at many biodigester sites. It is a valid concern: this new application comprises three large lagoons which are required to hold up to six months of digestate, the bi-product produced by this plant. This is because digestate cannot be spread evenly throughout the year as there are closed seasons for digestate spreading. It will need to be stored on site until it can be used. This has

the potential for odour issues (as well as creating further increases and peaks of HGV movements - see below). Digestate has a lot of available nitrogen. It also contains potassium, phosphorous, and sulphur. Nitrogen is very volatile. If exposed to air for too long, the nitrogen in the mix escapes into the atmosphere in the form of noxious ammonia gas.

The rural parish of Evenley is at the southern most point of Northamptonshire. It boundaries two counties, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. This rural location is directly on this boundary at the gateway to Northamptonshire, a point made about the previous application by members of WNCs strategic planning committee. What a welcome this overbearing and potentially odourous industrial plant would be to the County!

Traffic Data

At the last application, EPC and other objectors drew the officer's attention to the fact that the traffic figures put forward by Acorn did not make sense. For example, it advised that there would be just 68 HGVs arriving at the site each day during peak season but this would have required tractors hauling trailers laden with 55 tonnes of material, clearly not possible. Sadly the planning officer did not appreciate these inaccuracies so did not take them into consideration. At a meeting in September 2024 with EPC, Acorn confirmed that these figures were wildly inaccurate and in this application it states those figures should be 320 HGVs per day. That is a massive increase of 477 per cent on Acorn's previous estimates.

These 27,650 annual traffic movements will have to cross the Barley Mow roundabout which connects the A421 trunk road with the A43. This is already an accident blackspot whilst the A43 is at breaking point as one of the UK's major strategic routes as well as a key delivery route for the extra 1200 HGVs using it daily to supply nearby HS2 operations at Mixbury and Westbury (one of its largest compounds on the entire route). Barley Mow roundabout is the 'linchpin' that connects these two compounds and a special HS2 liaison group comprising council members and officers, parish councils and HS2 exists specifically to monitor, discuss and solve issues along this route.

It is therefore now well documented that the local infrastructure is already overwhelmed feeding on and off these major strategic routes. It is recognised that the rapid growth of the A43 has meant that this major route is fed by small minor roads, in contrast with most major strategic routes. Many are single track and wholly inappropriate for large quantities of huge tractors hauling heavily-laden trailers. Acorn suggests that it will 'restrict movement of HGVs routeing through Croughton village. How will this be policed? At the December 2023 Strategic Planning Committee meeting for the previous application Acorn stated it would place stickers on its supplier vehicles. How will this help? And how will it restrict heavily-laden HGVs carrying agricultural materials from farms in rural locations from travelling through the numerous small villages that surround this site? Its own 'illustrative feedstock counterparts in the local area' diagram illustrates that these HGVs will be using small countryside routes to access the A43 en route to the plant. Neither the major nor local infrastructure can cope with this huge volume of traffic.

In its application, a short paragraph (point 8 Traffic Management) of its transport statement suggests it will produce a traffic management plan that will relate to HGV routeing, vehicle scheduling, wheel wash... ensuring that access junction activity is managed appropriately and that 'all site users will be made aware of the TMP'. None of these measures are enforceable and pay lip service to the seriousness and danger this scale of traffic will create. Acorn suggests it can mitigate HGV movements using 'farm tracks'. The planning officer must be made aware that these do not currently exist and a proposed entrance via Gateridge farm requires travelling along rural unclassified and single track roads regularly used by cyclists, horse-riders and walkers.

Furthermore, Acorn is suggesting in its application that at its peak the plant will receive 320 HGVs per day. There is however no mention in its documents how it intends to process these 320 HGVs within its operating schedule. It has been calculated that this means each tractor will have just 75 seconds to drive up a 300m road, have its load weighed at the weigh-bridge, unload into its loading bay, move through the wheel-wash and return down the 300m road. Obviously this is not achievable and will cause HGVs to back-up, potentially queuing on the B4031, just 30m from the proposed new entrance to RAF Croughton (comprising a central

reservation and traffic lights) and subsequently the busy A43. This is a major concern as Barley Mow roundabout is an already a dangerous accident blackspot and congested area.

Finally because of the aforementioned closed season for spreading digestate and the Government's rules regulating this, it will not be possible to remove it at regular intervals across the year as suggested in point 1.3 'traffic generation' and in table 6-1HGV/Traffic Forecast it states that 1,119 movements will be by HGV, yet in another application, in Winchester, it states that this requires 16 tonne tractor and trailer movement. Obviously using 16t tractor and trailers will increase these figures substantially. Yet again EPC must cast doubt on Acorn's traffic figures and urges the planning officer to do the same.

Environmental Impact Assessment

Could the planning officer please explain why Acorn's previous application for this site required an Environmental Impact Assessment but there is not one for this application. This is a major industrial development, vast in scale, in open countryside, affecting landscape and residential amenity and creating a massive increase in traffic. Why is an EIA not required for this application?

Conclusion

SNC Local Plan Part two under which this application is determined states under SS2 that permission will be granted where the proposed development 'does not result in the unacceptable loss of undeveloped land, open spaces and locally important views of particular significance to the form and character of a settlement; demonstrates compatibility with its surroundings, local character of the area in terms of type, scale, massing, siting, form, design etc, reduce harmful impacts on wildlife and neighbours, has appropriate regard to its effect on air quality; would not pose additional risk to neighbours located in the vicinity of sites used for the storage, or processing or transporting of hazardous substances etc.

This application remains industrial development in the countryside. Its siting, scale and mass is more impactful than in the previous application and will indeed have significant detrimental effect on both people and environment here in the parish of Evenley and surrounding villages. WNC's Strategic Committee rejected Acorn's previous application at its meeting in December 2023. Evenley Parish Council urges the officer to support that decision by recommending rejection of Acorn's second application.

Yours sincerely,

Cathy Knott

Parish Clerk
Evenley Parish Council