

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

- Q: Why has Biffa chosen Anaerobic Digestion technology?
- A: Both In Vessel Composting (IVC) and Anaerobic Digestion (AD) are viable processes for treating food waste and are preferable to landfilling. Biffa already have planning permission for the installation of an IVC plant at Poplars that has not been implemented. IVC can be cheaper to build but it only produces compost and no renewable energy. AD, whilst more expensive, produces significant quantities of renewable energy with a secondary compost product, so much more value is recovered from the waste. AD is widely supported and promoted by Government and Environmental Groups.
- Q: Why have you chosen Poplars?
- A: Poplars is an existing strategic waste management facility. The food waste that would be processed in the AD facility is already being brought into the site and landfilled. As well as the current landfill operation, the principle of waste treatment is also already established at the site with the operational open windrow composting facility and the consented IVC facility. The site is already a generator of renewable power with a connection to the national grid that has spare capacity to take more power from any new facility on the site. The provision of the AD plant at Poplars will ensure that waste is diverted from landfill consistent with European and National Government policy.
- Q: Why have you chosen this location on the Poplars site?
- A: The plant would replace the existing open windrow green waste composting operation with a fully enclosed system with much better environmental controls. The chosen location is on relatively low lying land relative to its surroundings and will therefore be less visible than other locations on the site. The area chosen is also the last phase to be landfilled at the site hence the plant can be retained almost for the whole life of the landfill. Finally this location is adjacent to all of the existing built development associated with the waste operations at the site. It is also close to the connection into the National Grid for the export of generated electricity.
- Q: How visible will the plant be?
- A: The land proposed for the AD plant is lower than the surrounding land. The Poplars site is well screened by perimeter banks and trees. A full visual impact assessment has been carried out that shows only the very top of the AD tanks and the flues associated with the electricity generating engines will be visible from outside of the site. Cross sections to illustrate this are on our web site at <http://www.biffa.co.uk/poplars> .
- Q: How much extra traffic will the proposal generate and will it use the existing site access?
- A: All of the waste that would be processed in the plant is already brought onto site and landfilled. The waste would simply be diverted from landfill to the AD plant. There would therefore be no increase in traffic over the existing level. All traffic will use the access from the roundabout on Lichfield Road.
- Q: Will the plant generate odours?
- A: All waste will be unloaded inside the building and no waste will be deposited outside. All of the processing plant would be contained inside a fully enclosed building. The building would be fitted with fast acting automatic doors that open only to allow entry by delivery vehicles and which close immediately after the vehicle has moved through the door opening. The building is designed with "negative air pressure" such that when a door opens, air is drawn into the building from outside. All air from the plant and building will be passed through a biofilter that effectively removes any odours before the

clean air is discharged to atmosphere. The planning application includes a full Environmental Impact Assessment that addresses the issue of odour and which concludes that the measures in place will effectively control the release of odour. Once operational the plant will be required to comply with an Environmental Permit issued by the Environment Agency that will include conditions covering measures for odour control

Q: Will the plant be noisy?

A: The plant will be located inside a fully enclosed building and the electricity generating engines inside containers that are designed to minimise noise emissions. The application is accompanied by a full and quantitative noise assessment that includes background monitoring of noise levels both during the day and at night at locations outside of the site. Predictions were made of the impact of noise from the plant both during the day and at night at these properties. These predictions are within acceptable limits and indicate that the operation of the plant will not generate sufficient noise to cause for complaint. Noise monitoring will be repeated once the site is operational to confirm that noise generated from the plant is within the predicted levels.

Q: Will the AD plant result in an extension to the life of the Poplars landfill?

A: The Poplars landfill, in common with all other operational landfills is likely to last longer due to gradually reducing future inputs. This is because Government is putting in place measures such as increasing landfill tax to encourage a reduction in the amount of waste landfilled. Waste that is not landfilled will be recycled or treated in a facility such as that proposed at Poplars. The reduction in landfilling will take place whether or not there is an AD plant at the Poplars site. This is because other plant will be developed elsewhere in the West Midlands Region that will take waste away from landfill. There will continue to be a need in future years to landfill residual waste which can't be recycled or used to generate energy, but the quantities will be much smaller, meaning landfill sites generally will tend to be slower in filling up.

Q: What will be the effect on local air quality?

A: The Environmental Impact Assessment submitted with the planning application includes a full and quantitative assessment of the potential impact of the plant on local air quality. The assessment includes a computer dispersion modeling exercise and concentrates on the potential impact on air quality at local residential and commercial properties and designated habitat sites. The assessment concludes that the operation of the proposed AD facility will not result in the exceedence of any air quality standards or guidelines; that there will be no significant adverse effects on any designated habitat sites; and, that traffic associated with the development will have no significant air quality impacts.

Q: How much electricity will be generated?

A: The plant will generate between 4 and 5 megawatts of electricity. Average domestic electricity usage is approximately 0.5kWh. The plant will therefore provide sufficient electricity to satisfy the average demand of between 8000 and 10000 houses.