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## Biffa lodges planning application for Cannock energy plant

A planning application for an energy recovery facility on the Kingswood Lakeside industrial park in Cannock has been lodged by Biffa with Staffordshire County Council following local consultations by Biffa earlier in the year.

If approved the state of the art power plant will generate 34 MW of electricity, enough to power the equivalent of 68,000 homes, including potential power and heat supply to neighbouring businesses. The fuel for the plant will be 400,000 tonnes a year of the region's non-hazardous residual business waste - waste left over after recycling and composting - which currently goes to landfill.

Biffa sends separately collected recyclables to its recycling operations in the region and will send food waste to its anaerobic digestion (AD) plant which is currently being built on its adjacent Poplars landfill site

The energy plant is part of a comprehensive £200million waste management scheme that also includes revised vehicle access and phasing of the Poplars landfill and increased capacity of the food waste AD facility.

The revised vehicle access is part of the planning application for the energy facility. This would see about 80% of the lorry traffic redirected away from the existing Poplars landfill entrance if the energy plant went ahead.

According to Biffa's head of planning, Jeff Rhodes, "As the energy facility site backs on to our landfill, we would use this as a new access for any landfill traffic as well as traffic to the energy plant itself.

"Developing an energy plant on the Kingswood site would also mean less traffic overall than if it was developed for more warehousing or industrial units, which is what its current planning permission allows for."

In response to local requests the sequence of infilling the landfill will be revised and would mean landfill operations stay as far away as possible and for as long as possible from the housing on Lichfield Road.

A separate smaller application for the change in the anaerobic digestion facility was submitted in June and is awaiting a decision.

In May Biffa held exhibitions for local residents as part of an ongoing community consultation process. "As expected, some people supported our plans whilst others were against." said Mr Rhodes.

"Also, quite a few people asked about possible community funding. We want to discuss the community funding further but, for example, if Biffa receives planning consent, we could establish a fund, managed by local councillors, into which, say, 20p for every tonne processed would be paid. This could result in £80,000 a year toward whatever the community wanted to spend it on. This could run for the life of the plant – 25 years or more."

Last year Biffa gained planning consent for an anaerobic digestion (AD) facility on the landfill site to replace a composting operation. AD is a treatment for food waste diverted from landfill and used to generate renewable energy. Construction has started and the new plant will be operational by early next year. The proposed increase in capacity can be provided within the boundary of the existing plant and the main change will be the addition of one extra digester tank as a result in increased customer interest.