

Northacre Renewable Energy – Press Statement on Committee Meeting – 17 June 2021

Northacre Renewable Energy (NREL) has welcomed the significant endorsement of its proposals by Wiltshire Council's planning department, whose report will be considered by Wiltshire Council's Strategic Planning Committee on 22 June 2021.

The Planning Case Officer's report recommends that the proposed change in technology used by the already-permitted Energy from Waste (EfW) facility at Northacre Industrial Park in Westbury, be approved by councillors.

Alex Young, Director of Northacre Renewable Energy commented: *"The Northacre Facility is an important local project and we are pleased that our application has been recommended for approval. We also believe strongly that as an important local matter, that it be decided on locally, by Wiltshire's elected representatives and we look forward to the Committee's decision."*

The Northacre facility is strategically important to Wiltshire's sustainable future. The project represents a £200 million investment in the local economy and a new source of employment including many highly-skilled permanent roles – forming part of the Government's drive to "build back better" in a post Covid-19 economy.

In addition, the Northacre facility addresses the pressing need for a sustainable long-term solution to **non-recyclable** residual waste in Wiltshire, by reducing landfill's contribution to climate change. A report published by Tolvik Consulting in May 2020, outlines that the 'UK generates over 70,000 tonnes of residual waste per day' or over 25 million tonnes of waste per year, which cannot be recycled.

Mr Young added: *"In 2019, 13.9 tonnes of residual waste was treated in UK energy from waste (EfW) facilities. This means that over 11 million tonnes was either landfilled or exported to Europe as fuel for similar EfW facilities - adding thousands of additional vehicle miles each year and generating unnecessary pollution. These are not acceptable or sustainable options."*

NREL estimates that the facility will reduce **greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 58,000 tonnes per annum** when considered against the alternative of landfilling, which is why UK Government policy continues to support the development of EfW facilities, as part of the country's path to a net zero-carbon economy.

This point was underlined in Wiltshire Council's legal opinion of the proposed development, published ahead of the Committee meeting, which states *"Government policy is to move to zero landfill, and EfW treatment of residual waste to recover energy from that waste is part of the armoury of measures which are to be deployed."*

This policy reflects the fact that the UK has a significant shortage of EfW capacity and facilities operating in neighbouring counties, are already functioning at full capacity. The legal opinion provided by Wiltshire Council added: *"EfW is a low carbon energy source and a waste management process encouraged by policy and for which there is a continuing need"*.

The Northacre facility will turn 243,000 tonnes of the region's commercial and industrial residual waste into low carbon energy – enough to power 48,000 homes and improve the resilience of the local electricity supply network.

Whilst concerns over air quality, emissions and pollution control have been raised by local residents, a UK-wide study commissioned by Public Health England and the Scottish Government found *"no conclusive links to health effects from waste incinerators"*.

That conclusion was based on data gathered from 22 sites across the UK by researchers at Imperial College London's Small Area Health Statistics Unit (SAHSU). In a media statement issued by Imperial following the release of the study, Professor Anna Hansell, Director of the Centre for Environmental Health and Sustainability at the University of Leicester, who previously led the work while at Imperial College London, said: *"Modern and well-regulated incinerators are likely to have a very small, or even undetectable, impact on people living nearby."*

Northacre

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“We believe that it is our responsibility to develop the best possible project and, if granted permission, we would have an opportunity to build a state-of-the-art facility which allows Wiltshire to play its part in providing a sustainable solution to a pressing waste and energy challenge in the region, whilst delivering environmental and economic benefits to the County,” **Mr Young concluded.**

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. Planning Department report and recommendation: https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/documents/s190996/20_06775_WCM_Committee_Report.pdf
2. Legal opinion provided to Wiltshire Council - https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/documents/s190142/20_06775_WCM_Annex_6_Legal_Opinion.pdf
3. Tolvik Consulting – UK Energy From Waste Statistics - <https://www.tolvik.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Tolvik-UK-EfW-Statistics-2019-Report-June-2020.pdf>

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About Northacre Renewable Energy Limited

[Northacre Renewable Energy Limited \(NREL\)](#) is a special purpose joint venture established to deliver the Northacre facility in Westbury. NREL is owned by Bioenergy Infrastructure Group, a UK independent power producer specialising in energy-from-waste and biomass facilities, and The Hills Group, a Wiltshire based company with business interests in waste management, quarrying aggregates and house building.

About Bioenergy Infrastructure Group

Bioenergy Infrastructure Group (“BIG”) is a specialist owner and operator of biomass and waste to energy solutions. BIG is establishing the UK’s largest portfolio of biomass and waste to energy facilities, which will have the potential to divert over 1 million tonnes of waste each year from landfill and deliver vital additional electricity capacity to the national grid, helping to meet demand from industry and households across the UK. Taking a long-term approach and targeting mid-scale facilities throughout the development cycle, from greenfield sites to those already in operation, BIG has established a market leading position by leveraging its experience and speed of decision making to achieve the level of portfolio scale, diversification and operational synergies required to attract institutional capital into UK bioenergy.

More about BIG at <https://bioenergyinfrastructure.co.uk/>

About Hills Group

The Hills Group is a privately-owned family company with a broad and successful portfolio of business activities which include recycling and waste management; quarrying of aggregates and production of ready-mixed concrete; and building new homes. It is a dynamic regional business which, while centred on Wiltshire, has stretched its boundaries into neighbouring areas.

More about Hills Group at <https://www.hills-group.co.uk/>