

# **Addendum (August 2025) to Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for Proposed Anaerobic Digester Plant, Gunby, Lincolnshire (March 2024)**

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This Addendum to the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been prepared on behalf of Future Biogas to supplement the main LVIA in providing further clarification on the conclusions on effects of landscape character and visual impact.

## **2. District Landscape Character Assessment**

- 2.1 Reference is made to the South Kesteven Landscape Character Assessment (2007) and the Colsterworth & District Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix 3 of Colsterworth and District Neighbourhood Plan, as submitted to South Kesteven District Council (January 2017)).
- 2.2 The South Kesteven Landscape Character Assessment forms part of current planning policy, building on the national character assessment (NCA), divides the district into six character areas. Colsterworth and District is located, as in the National Character Area, within the Kesteven Uplands. The key relevant characteristics for this area (as outlined at paragraph 4.6 of the South Kesteven Landscape Character Assessment and referred to at paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 of the main LVIA) include:
- A relatively unified, simple, medium-scale agricultural landscape, with a high proportion of historic woodland.
  - Undulating landform based around the valleys of the Rivers Witham and East and West Glen and the Welland to the south.
  - A dispersed, nucleated settlement pattern, mostly following the river valleys.
  - Enclosed mostly by hedgerows, with hedgerow trees.
  - Modern human influences include airfields and the A1, Great North Road.
- 2.3 Within this document the most relevant landscape management objectives for this area include:
- Protect and improve field boundary condition.
  - Protect existing hedgerow trees.
  - Plant new hedgerow trees.
  - Maintain important grassland areas.
  - Protect important and distinctive woodland cover.
  - Protect field trees, particularly in parkland and in large arable fields.
  - Maintain traditional village forms.
  - Use of new planting to minimise the visual impact of major roads and industrial buildings.
- 2.4 Other management objectives for this Landscape Character Area are listed in paragraph 5.14 of the LVIA.

- 2.5 The Colsterworth and District Neighbourhood Plan notes that the drive for Iron made the Northamptonshire Ironstone a valuable commodity in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and became the predominant employer in the area. Much of the land to the West of the river Witham in which the site is located was exploited for its iron ore deposits which were open cast and transported via railways to Scunthorpe for smelting. Most of the land has been reclaimed and the abandoned railways now are used for recreation and for wildlife management.
- 2.6 Policy 5 of the Colsterworth and District Neighbourhood Plan highlights ten 'Important Views and Vistas' within the neighbourhood. None of these are considered to be affected by the proposal.

### **3. LVIA assessment of Landscape Character**

- 3.1 Whilst both the South Kesteven Landscape Character Assessment (2007) and the Colsterworth & District Landscape Character Assessment note the relatively tranquil landscape, the former concedes that the strong landscape pattern including many woodlands could in places be beneficial in new development (at paragraph 4.32). This suggests an acceptance of development, subject to satisfactory siting, topography and presence of semi-natural landscape features.
- 3.2 It is noted that the area around the Site is not subject to any landscape conservation or protection designations, and it is considered that it is an intensively farmed and highly managed landscape with few extant semi-natural landscape features or distinctive characteristics.
- 3.3 Even the woodland immediately to the west of the application site is a modern feature of the second half of the 20th century. The extensive past use of the surrounding land for ironstone extraction, and its subsequent partial restoration, has resulted in significant changes in the natural landform as evidenced in topographical mapping. A railway associated with the ironstone works stretched north-south running along the western side of the Site, and which is now used in part as farm tracks, and the former railways sidings and quarry immediately north of the site are now used as a busy industrial and commercial centre.
- 3.4 Thus, it is a relatively undistinguished landscape with topography and features which have been heavily influenced by historical industrial activity, recent commercial development immediately to the south of the site and modern intensive agriculture.
- 3.5 The site is located a considerable distance from any public rights of way or residential properties, so views to the site are limited by distance, roadside hedgerow, topography and other features. The proposed development is located within existing field boundaries and would not involve the loss of any existing landscape features.
- 3.6 The form and appearance of the domed digester vessel and associated tanks introduced by the proposed development may contrast with the large barn type structures normally seen on agricultural complexes in the countryside. However, following completion of the construction works, taking into account the distance from residential properties and

settlements, the existing vegetation, local topography, surrounding agricultural and commercial activities, and the fact that the site does not fall within a designated landscape, it is considered that initially the proposed development would result in a partial change to the landscape characteristics of the designated landscape Character Area. Visually, the LVIA concedes that from the closest viewpoints to the east (from the permissive footpath south of Gunby) and some views through the roadside hedgerow to the north-east and east there will be a moderate adverse impact (pages 30-37 of the LVIA), due to construction activity (including the impact of movement, use of cranes and other activities related to construction) and the introduction of a new built feature, reducing to minor adverse with landscape mitigation after around year 5. The reduction of the level of impact is because over time (5-15 years) the proposed new planting and growing-on of existing hedgerow will mature and increase in density and soften the proposed scheme, particularly lower-level plant and vehicular activity, blending it in with the background woodland and help it integrate into the local landscape.

- 3.7 The effect on landscape character is not considered to be significant due to the extensive landscape mitigation measures and the careful location of the plant within existing field boundaries, avoiding the loss of any existing landscape features, and with existing woodland behind and hedgerow in front for immediate partial screening.
- 3.8 There is a slight adverse impact on the topography of the area (referred to at paragraph 13.5 of the LVIA). This is because the proposed development will make a slight difference to the landform. However, this is very minor, and one which would be expected with any development – the change isn't at an extent which will be noticeable.
- 3.9 The proposed development initially would have a medium nature of change on the local baseline landscape character and over time with the medium-term establishment of the proposed mitigation would reduce to a low nature of change, and the perception of a major development in this location would not be significant once existing hedgerows have been allowed to grow on and new planting becomes established after 5-8 years. Proposed off-site landscape measures will further reinforce the landscape character and structure of the area. The potential perception of change in the landscape character in the long term is not considered to be significant.
- 3.10 Overall, therefore, it is considered that, taking into consideration the proposed on- and off-site landscaping, the proposed development would not have a significant effect on the surrounding rural landscape character.