

Northacre Renewable Energy – Press Statement on Environmental permit consultation – 22 February 2021.

Northacre Renewable Energy Limited (NREL), is seeking to change the technology for its Northacre facility from gasification to moving grate combustion. This change has required a new planning application and a decision is expected to be made by Wiltshire Planning Committee, although a date for this has not yet been confirmed. The need for the facility and the suitability of the location have already been clearly established by previous planning permission granted in July 2019.

Alongside the planning application, NREL also applied to the Environment Agency (EA) for an Environmental Permit to operate the facility.

The EA has consulted with the public on the environmental permit application since 27th November 2020 and following a four-week extension, the consultation closed on 21st February 2021.

The EA's in-house technical specialist will now undertake detailed audits of the information contained in the application, including documents which detail how NREL intends to protect the health of people and the wider environment. The expectation is that the detailed assessment process could take at least 12 months.

Whilst concerns over air quality, emissions and pollution control have been raised by local residents, Public Health England's risk assessment remains that modern, well run and regulated municipal waste incinerators are not a significant risk to public health, which is supported by NREL's detailed assessment on the impact on local air quality.

In addition, NREL has confirmed that emissions from the facility would be tightly regulated and limits set by the Environmental Permit. These limits, which were already extremely stringent, have been recently tightened further. Emissions will be monitored 24 hours a day and the data will be submitted to the EA as well as being made publicly available.

The Northacre facility has never been more important to Wiltshire's sustainable future. The project represents a £200 million investment in the local economy and a major new source of employment including many highly-skilled permanent roles – a chance to be part of the Government's drive to "Build back better".