

14. AMENITY

14.1 Introduction

- 14.1.1 In addition to the topics already considered within the Environmental Statement, this chapter considers and assesses the potential of the proposed Energy Facility to cause any other type of environmental nuisances associated with activities onsite.
- 14.1.2 It should be noted that in addition to the planning permission sought through this application, the facility will also require an Environmental Permit from the Environment Agency. Amenity impacts will be addressed through the permitting process and will be enforced through ongoing regulation under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 (as amended 2019) and the site Environmental Management System (EMS).
- 14.1.3 The potential amenity impacts not covered by specific chapters within this Environmental Statement and some of the key mitigation measures proposed are outlined within this chapter.

14.2 Aims and Objectives

- 14.2.1 This chapter seeks to identify and assess the wider effects on the proposed development on local amenity.

14.3 Legislation and Policy Context

National Planning Policy

- 14.3.1 Within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019, most 'amenity' aspects are covered through chapters already considered, including Chapter 12 (achieving well-designed places) and Chapter 15 (conserving and enhancing the natural environment). Achieving the aims set out within these chapters should contribute to high levels of amenity value for residents, workers and visitors.
- 14.3.2 The NPPF policies with particular relevance to this chapter are:
Paragraph 127 - *'Achieving well designed spaces,'* states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that development should *'...create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users ...'*

- 14.3.3 Paragraph 170 - *‘Conserving and enhancing the natural environment’* states that *‘Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*
- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
 - b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland...’*
- 14.3.4 Paragraph 171 states that *‘Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework...’*
- 14.3.5 In accordance with paragraph 171, the application site has been safeguarded for the proposed use; and in doing so, the Local Authority will have considered the amenity value provided by the land.
- 14.3.6 Paragraph 180 - *‘Ground Conditions and Pollution’* states that *‘Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development.’*
- 14.3.7 Paragraph 180 goes on to require that *‘in doing so they should:*
- a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum, potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life;*
 - b) identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and*
 - c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.’*
- 14.3.8 The policies above have been satisfied by locating a development of high-quality design within a site allocated (and permitted) as an employment site for B1, B2 and B8 use. The site is subject

to a masterplan which includes the proposed use and is relatively isolated from residential receptors.

Local Planning Policy

14.3.9 Policy 31 of the County Durham Plan seeks to ensure that local amenity is protected.

14.3.10 This Environmental Statement (ES) and detailed technical assessments have been submitted as part of this Planning Application to assess the potential impacts of the proposed development. The Local Plan policies highlight the importance of amenity value, as they seek to ensure that new developments do not reduce amenity; but instead where possible, increase amenity value.

14.4 Assessment Methodology

Relevant Guidance

14.4.1 There is no specific methodology required to be used when considering amenity issues. This chapter identifies the potential impacts on amenity and determines the significance of this impact on local receptors.

Consultation

14.4.2 The Scoping Opinion provided by Durham County Council has requested that the following be considered as part of the Environmental Statement chapter.

“The Scoping Report states that this chapter seeks to pick up any potential impacts that may not have been considered elsewhere in the ES. This could include issues such as litter, dust, vermin etc which may not be considered within a technical chapter. The chapter will include a review of relevant policy that will be used to assess a baseline situation in terms of amenity, and then the potential impacts (un-mitigated) of the development proposed. Mitigation measures to address any of the impacts identified will be set out. It is assumed that the chapter will then review any residual impacts”.

14.4.3 This chapter seeks to address these requirements.

Study Area

14.4.4 The impact of the proposed development on the site and local area is assessed within this chapter.

Assessment of Impact

14.4.5 For the purpose of this chapter, impact is considered as follows:

-) Neutral
-) Minor
-) Moderate
-) Adverse

Assessment of Significance

14.4.6 For the purpose of this chapter, significance is defined as follows:

-) **Neutral effect:** The project will not have an impact on amenity.
-) **Beneficial effect:** The project will have a positive impact on amenity.
-) **Averse effect** The project will have a detrimental impact on amenity.

Cumulative Impact

14.4.7 Where potential impacts have been identified, these will be considered in combination with schemes identified in chapter 2 of this ES.

Limitations

14.4.8 This chapter is reliant on the technical assessments contained within other chapters within this ES.

14.5 Baseline Conditions

14.5.1 The baseline conditions of the site are detailed within Chapter 3 of this ES, which describes the application site, surrounding area and sensitive receptors within the vicinity of the site. In summary, the site is within an industrial location, close to industrial uses which are not considered to be sensitive to the proposed development type.

14.5.2 A recent mixed use planning consent has been granted directly to the north of the proposed development site. The developments include a community hospital and pharmacy, sheltered care unit, gym and well being centre, hotel, public house, micro-brewery and vets practice.

14.5.3 The study area is generally accessible via public roads and footpaths in the urban areas to the east of the site. However, the site itself does not provide any amenity value to local residents.

14.5.4 The Consett and Sunderland Railway Path is a long-distance path which follows the route of the former railway line and is approximately 50m north of the site. This connects with the Lanchester Valley Railway Path approximately 600m to the southwest of the site.

14.5.5 There are sites of nature conservation importance on the western edge of the study area these include Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and National Nature Reserves. There is a Local Nature Reserve (local designation) at Allensford Woods to the northwest of the site.

Design Measures to Reduce Amenity Impacts

14.5.6 Before considering the potential for amenity impacts associated with the proposed development, this section sets out how impacts on amenity have been avoided and reduced - through an appropriate choice of site location and high-quality design.

14.5.7 The wider area has outline planning consent for B1 and B2 uses and is allocated for employment in saved policies IN2 and IN3 of the Derwentside Local Plan and policy EMP130 (policy 2) of the emerging Durham County Plan. The proposed development is therefore considered to be consistent with the policy allocation being similar in both nature and appearance to the surrounding land uses.

14.5.8 The proposed technology has a number of integral design processes which seek to minimise amenity impacts as follows:

-) Noise attenuation within the buildings and stack;
-) Minimisation of the storage of waste materials to just a small number of days' supply
-) Only accepting pre-treated processed materials that will not have food components
-) Only storing waste within the buildings which are specifically designed for this purpose.
-) The use of negative pressure within the waste reception buildings;
-) The provision of odour abatement systems as set out in Chapter 5 of this ES;
-) The treatment of emissions with Urea and Activated carbon to treat and stabilise outputs.
-) Commitment to prepare and adopt a Construction Management Plan in agreement with the local planning authority as a condition of planning permission.
-) Provision of Odour Management Scheme and Dust assessment within Chapter 10 of this Environmental Statement.

14.6 Identification and Evaluation of Key Impacts

14.6.1 Amenity is considered as an integral aspect of the whole Environmental Statement, the reduction of impacts on air, land and water seeks to achieve the protection of both local and wider amenity for all.

14.6.2 Whilst a comprehensive set of design measures and operational proposals have been incorporated into the proposed development which will ensure that the potential for amenity impacts is either removed or significantly reduced, the ES nevertheless considers what potential residual risks for amenity impacts remain, what their impact could be and then further actions that can be taken to mitigate these risks and impacts. In this context, the potential residual risks and impacts during site preparation, construction and operation are assessed below

Construction

14.6.3 Site preparation, groundworks, construction works, and the delivery and storage of construction materials have the potential to cause the following amenity impacts if effective mitigation measures are not put in place. These include:

Mud

14.6.4 Vehicles moving on and off the site have the potential to track mud along local roads causing both a safety and amenity issue.

14.6.5 The use of a wheel wash system will ensure that mud is not tracked along local roads and it is therefore concluded that the proposed development will have a neutral impact on amenity associated with mud.

Litter

14.6.6 During the construction process, there is a potential that packaging waste may be created and without proper management will create pollution and nuisance to local users.

14.6.7 The provision of a full Site Waste Management Plan during construction will ensure that all wastes are managed, segregated, and removed off site for appropriate disposal. The provision of a SWMP will ensure that the proposed developments impact on amenity associated with litter nuisance is neutral.

Dust

14.6.8 Earthworks and associated soil storage have the potential to generate dust.

- 14.6.9 The provision of a dust management plan will ensure that any sources of dust will be covered or doused to ensure that the impacts on the site and surroundings are minimised. It is therefore concluded that the proposed development will have a neutral impact on dust nuisance during the construction stage.

Waste

- 14.6.10 During the construction phase there is likely to be a range of waste materials created on the site. This will include excavated materials, packaging waste from construction materials and general site waste.

- 14.6.11 A Site Waste Management Plan will be produced for the construction stage which will appropriately manage all waste on site. It is therefore concluded that the proposed development will have a neutral effect on waste during the construction stage.

Noise and Vibration

- 14.6.12 Construction vehicles and operations have the potential to generate waste and vibration. A Construction Management Plan will be provided which will ensure that noise generating processes and equipment will be reduced and or managed appropriately to avoid impacts to the site or surroundings.

- 14.6.13 It is therefore concluded that the proposed development will have a neutral effect on construction noise and vibration.

Vehicle Emissions

- 14.6.14 Construction and delivery vehicles have the potential to create vehicle emissions. A Construction Management Plan will be provided to ensure that idling vehicles will be switched off and minimise the turning and waiting of vehicles. It is therefore concluded that the construction phase of the proposed development will have a temporary minor adverse impact associated with vehicle emissions.

- 14.6.15 The cumulative impacts associated with emissions have been considered as part of the air quality chapter.

Operation

- 14.6.16 The greatest potential for adverse amenity impacts from the proposed development are associated with activities around the acceptance, sorting, processing and removal of residual materials. These include:

Odour

- 14.6.17 The proposed development will manage materials which have been segregated and cleaned prior to being permitted at the site. The integral mitigation of buildings at negative pressure and the implementation of an odour management system will ensure that the proposed development will manage and prevent odours.
- 14.6.18 It is therefore concluded that the proposed development will have a neutral effect on odour nuisance during the operation phase.

Noise

- 14.6.19 The noise assessment included in Chapter 9 of this ES has concluded that the proposed development will not give rise to a significant noise impact on the site or its surroundings. It has concluded that the proposed development will have a neutral effect on noise nuisance during the operational stage.

Litter and Vermin

- 14.6.20 The proposed development has the potential for litter release on import to the buildings if not properly mitigated. All deliveries to and from the site will utilise covered HGVs to ensure that no materials are released during delivery.
- 14.6.21 On receipt of materials, materials will be deposited and managed in sealed buildings (with fast shutting roller shutter doors) with little possibility of litter release.
- 14.6.22 The removal of the risk of litter ensures that vermin will not be attracted to the development site.
- 14.6.23 It is therefore concluded that the proposed development will have a neutral effect on litter and vermin nuisance during the operational stage.

Heat

- 14.6.24 Heat is a valuable resource and as such will be utilised within the plant and also used by other off-site users.
- 14.6.25 It is therefore concluded that the use of heat will have a minor beneficial impact for local users.

Emissions

- 14.6.26 The proposed development treats all residues, both air and ash to ensure that the proposed development meets the strict IED requirements. The Air Quality Assessment has concluded

that the operational phase of the proposed development will have a neutral effect on air quality on both human and ecological receptors.

Vehicle Emissions

14.6.27 Operational vehicles have the potential to create emissions. The transportation and air quality assessments have concluded that vehicle emissions will have a neutral effect during the operational stages.

Economic Impacts

14.6.28 The proposed development will provide job opportunities to support the local economy. This is discussed in greater detail in chapter 14 of the ES. The proposed development will have a minor beneficial impact on the local economy.

14.7 Mitigation

14.7.1 As referred to above, the proposed development incorporates a suite of design features and proposed construction and operational practices which will ensure amenity impacts are minimised. The ES has nevertheless considered what residual or further impacts could arise in order to identify what further mitigations could be adopted to avoid or reduce the impact of these. These are set out below.

14.7.2 The following mitigation measures will be implemented during the to further reduce any impacts on local amenity:

-) The proposals already stipulate that waste will only be unloaded from vehicles inside the fuel store with fuel store doors closed. Waste arriving at the site will be processed in a timely fashion using the 'first in' – 'first – out' principle;
-) Daily inspection of the site includes visual monitoring for pests, with records maintained and action taken immediately
-) Daily monitoring of noise and odours to ensure that the facility is being developed and operating in accordance with its permissions.
-) In stack sensors to monitor all air emissions and immediately feedback information to the control room and Environment Agency.

14.8 Residual Impacts

14.8.1 The assessment has demonstrated that with suitable integral and additional mitigation measures, the proposed development will have a **neutral impact** on the site and surrounds.

14.9 Conclusions

14.9.1 This chapter considered potential amenity issues that could arise during the construction and operational phases of the proposed development.

14.9.2 This chapter concludes that subject to the proposed mitigation measures being put in place, the development will not result in significant, adverse amenity impacts.

14.9.3 Table 16.1 below provides a summary of the likely impacts of the proposed development.

Phase	Nature of Effect	Significance of Impact	Magnitude of Impact	Duration	Mitigation	Residual	Level
Construction	Nuisance	Neutral/Minor Adverse	Negligible/Minor Averse	Temporary	CMP	Neutral/Minor Adverse	Local
Operation:	Nuisance	Neutral	Neutral	Permanent	Various	Neutral	Local