Permitting Decisions - Variation

We have decided to grant the variation for REnescience Northwich operated by Orsted REnescience Northwich O & M Limited.

The variation number is EPR/VP3338RD/V007.

The permit was issued on 30 September 2025.

The variation is for the addition of waste stream EWC 19 12 12 (which is source-segregated food wastes, which have been processed off-site and delivered to the facility in liquid form as feedstock for the Anaerobic Digestion plant. The operator will be suspending the residual waste pre-treatment activity temporarily. Instead, the Digestate Treatment Building (DTB) will be used for the receiving and unloading of source segregated food waste and the loading of liquid digestate generated by the AD Plant onto sealed tankers to be taken off site.

We consider in reaching that decision we have taken into account all relevant considerations and legal requirements and that the permit will ensure that the appropriate level of environmental protection is provided.

Purpose of this document

This decision document provides a record of the decision-making process. It

- highlights key issues in the determination
- summarises the decision making process in the decision considerations section to show how the main relevant factors have been taken into account

Unless the decision document specifies otherwise, we have accepted the applicant's proposals. We have assessed the aspects that are changing as part of this variation, we have not revisited any other sections of the permit.

Read the permitting decisions in conjunction with the environmental permit and the variation notice.

Key issues of the decision

Management of odour emissions

The site operates under an approved Odour Management Plan which has been updated as part of this variation. The site operates with an Odour Control Unit (OCU) which treats the air inside of the Digestate Treatment Building (DTB) through an ammonia scrubber prior to a carbon filter. The unloading of source-segregated food wastes and the loading of the liquid digestate will be undertaken within the fully enclosed DTB, both will be transported in sealed tankers. The DTB will be under negative air pressure, and the external doors will remain closed during loading and unloading. The OCU in the DTB building will be monitored on a weekly basis when the plant is operational.

Due to the amendments proposed under this variation, these being the temporary stopping of the residual waste pre-treatment activity, the use of only EWC Code 19 12 12 source-segregated food wastes in liquid form as feed stock and the fact solid digestate will no longer be produced, the potential for odour to be produced at the site is expected to reduce.

Noise

Due to the temporary cessation of the residual waste pre-treatment activity, multiple sources of noise will be removed. New pumps to be installed will be within the fully enclosed DTB and will not result in an increase in noise emissions compared to the current residual waste pre-treatment activity.

Decision considerations

Confidential information

A claim for commercial or industrial confidentiality has not been made. The decision was taken in accordance with our guidance on confidentiality.

Identifying confidential information

We have not identified information provided as part of the application that we consider to be confidential. The decision was taken in accordance with our guidance on confidentiality.

The site

The operator has provided a plan which we consider to be satisfactory. These show the extent of the site of the facility including the discharge points. The plan is included in the permit.

Nature conservation, landscape, heritage and protected species and habitat designations

We have checked the location of the application to assess if it is within the screening distances we consider relevant for impacts on nature conservation, landscape, heritage and protected species and habitat designations. The application is within our screening distances for these designations.

We have assessed the application and its potential to affect sites of nature conservation, landscape, heritage and protected species and habitat designations identified in the nature conservation screening report as part of the permitting process.

We consider that the application will not affect any site of nature conservation, landscape and heritage, and/or protected species or habitats identified. We have not consulted Natural England. The decision was taken in accordance with our guidance.

Environmental risk

We have reviewed the operator's assessment of the environmental risk from the facility. The operator’s risk assessment is satisfactory. The assessment shows that, applying the conservative criteria in our guidance on environmental risk assessment all emissions may be screened out as environmentally insignificant.

General operating techniques

We have reviewed the techniques used by the operator and compared these with the relevant guidance notes and we consider them to represent appropriate techniques for the facility. The operating techniques that the applicant must use are specified in table S1.2 in the environmental permit.

National Air Pollution Control Programme

We have considered the National Air Pollution Control Programme as required by the National Emissions Ceilings Regulations 2018. By setting emission limit values in line with technical guidance we are minimising emissions to air. This will aid the delivery of national air quality targets. We do not consider that we need to include any additional conditions in this permit.

Odour management

We have reviewed the odour management plan in accordance with our guidance on odour management. We consider that the odour management plan is satisfactory and we approve this plan.

We have approved the odour management plan as we consider it to be appropriate measures based on information available to us at the current time. The applicant should not take our approval of this plan to mean that the measures in the plan are considered to cover every circumstance throughout the life of the permit.

The applicant should keep the plans under constant review and revise them annually or if necessary sooner if there have been complaints arising from operations on site or if circumstances change. This is in accordance with our guidance 'Control and monitor emissions for your environmental permit'.

Fire prevention plan

We have not requested an updated Fire Prevention Plan at this time, as we do not consider the fire risk to be increasing as part of this variation.

Waste types

We have specified the permitted waste types, descriptions and quantities, which can be accepted at the regulated facility.

We are satisfied that the operator can accept these wastes for the following reasons:

- they are suitable for the proposed activities
- the proposed infrastructure is appropriate; and
- the environmental risk assessment is acceptable.

Improvement programme

Based on the information on the application, we consider that we need to include an improvement programme.

We have included improvement condition 20 and 21 to ensure that the operator updates the site odour management plan and environment management system (EMS) to reflect the changes brought about by this variation.

Improvement conditions IC 13, 16, 17, 18 and 19 have now been confirmed as complete.

Emission limits

Due to the suspension of the pre-treatment activity, the associated existing emission points to air have been removed. These are referenced in Table S3.1 as A6, A8, A9, A10 and A11. The proposed changes do not result in any additional points of emission to air. As such, A1-A5 are to remain the same, and A7 is to be referenced as A6.

Monitoring

Monitoring requirements have been removed for emission points to air A6, A8, A9, A10 and A11 as a result of the suspension of the pre-treatment activity. Monitoring of emission points A1-A5 remain the same and emission point A7 will now be referenced as A6.

Based on the information in the application we are satisfied that the operator's techniques, personnel and equipment have either MCERTS certification or MCERTS accreditation as appropriate. Please refer to Table S3.1 of the permit for further details.

Reporting

Reporting requirements have been removed for emission points to air A6, A8, A9, A10 and A11 as a result of the suspension of the pre-treatment activity. Reporting requirements for emission points A1-A5 remain the same including for emission point A7 now referenced as A6.

We made these decisions in accordance with Waste Treatment BAT Conclusions. Please refer to Table S4.1 of the permit for further details.

Management system

We are not aware of any reason to consider that the operator will not have the management system to enable it to comply with the permit conditions. The decision was taken in accordance with the guidance on operator competence and how to develop a management system for environmental permits.

Financial competence

There is no known reason to consider that the operator will not be financially able to comply with the permit conditions.

Growth duty

We have considered our duty to have regard to the desirability of promoting economic growth set out in section 108(1) of the Deregulation Act 2015 and the guidance issued under section 110 of that Act in deciding whether to grant this permit variation.

Paragraph 1.3 of the guidance says:

"The primary role of regulators, in delivering regulation, is to achieve the regulatory outcomes for which they are responsible. For a number of regulators, these regulatory outcomes include an explicit reference to development or growth. The growth duty establishes economic growth as a factor that all specified regulators

should have regard to, alongside the delivery of the protections set out in the relevant legislation."

We have addressed the legislative requirements and environmental standards to be set for this operation in the body of the decision document above. The guidance is clear at paragraph 1.5 that the growth duty does not legitimise non-compliance and its purpose is not to achieve or pursue economic growth at the expense of necessary protections.

We consider the requirements and standards we have set in this permit are reasonable and necessary to avoid a risk of an unacceptable level of pollution. This also promotes growth amongst legitimate operators because the standards applied to the operator are consistent across businesses in this sector and have been set to achieve the required legislative standards.