

Greenhags Biogas Plant conditions overturned

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Greenhags Biogas Plant conditions overturned

A controversial biogas plant has been saved after council chiefs agreed to drop restrictions.

Greenhags Energy Company had applied to use plant-based waste to help them generate gas at their Newton Mearns base.

Two years ago, the company was given planning permission to open the biogas plant on the condition that it only used agricultural feedstock to produce energy.

But following a site visit to a similar operation in Dunbartonshire, the planning committee has now overturned that condition.

Earlier this year the UK Government told Greenhags Energy Company that their gas must be derived from at least 50 per cent wastes to qualify for funding.

If the organisation had lost that funding access, it would have put the plant at risk of closure.

Speaking after the Dunbartonshire site visit, planning committee member Stewart Miller said: "I saw the operation and I was most impressed by the site. There was hardly a straw out of place.

"There was a wee bit of digestate to start with but there was no smell and no gas.

"If this site is going to be the same as that I don't have a problem with it."

In a planning statement on behalf of the company, Alan Couper Consulting said the plant would be "unlikely to be viable" without the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) from the UK Government.

UK Government rules now state that in order to gain access to RHI funding, at least half of all energy must be derived from wastes.

Plans to use wheat straw and cattle slurry were rejected in 2016 as it was feared that those items could have a detrimental effect on residents.

There had been fears that the company could revert to using animal slurry but that was denied by the owners.

And despite community members raising concerns over possible smells coming from the plant, the plans were given backing by all members of the committee.

Provost Jim Fletcher said: "There didn't seem to be too much wrong with the application.

All the environmental agencies seem to be very supportive.

They didn't raise objections."

Committee chairwoman Annette Ireland added: "I'm really pleased they've given us details of the digestate and that it's plant based. I'm really comfortable with this now."

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