

**Advanced Proteins Liaison Group Meeting
4.00pm Friday 24th September 2021**

The following members were present:

Chair Karen Bradley - Member of Parliament – Staffordshire Moorlands
Tilly Thorley – Karen Bradley’s Office

Environment Agency Steve Thomason – EPR Installations Team Leader

Councillors / MP: Cllr Mike Bowen- SMDC District Council
Cllr Harold Jennings – Cheddleton Parish Council
Cllr John Tunna – Cheddleton Parish Council

Advanced Proteins: Barney Williams - Technical Director

Animal Health: See apologies

Representing Residents: Ian Dakin – Also Cllr for Cheddleton Parish Council

Apologies: Gerry McLoughlin – Advanced Proteins
Stephanie Young (Trading Standards)
Jack Brereton – Member of Parliament – Stoke on Trent South
Animal and Plant Health Agency
Joe Smith
Dena Corden Le Petit
Patricia Duffy

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

Karen Bradley (KB) welcomed everyone to the meeting and the members of the group reciprocated.

2. Updates from:

Environment Agency

Steve Thomason (ST) explained that since the last liaison meeting on 30th April 2021, 61 reports had been made to the Environment Agency, 60 of which related to odour and 1 relating to noise. There was a spike in reports in July when there were 28 reports received during the month.

Several members of the group commented that they had received contact from residents with regards to the increase in odour's over recent months and feedback from the Company would be appreciated.

BW confirmed that the Company takes all complaints very seriously, and a thorough investigation is undertaken for each one received. The investigation involves analysis of raw material trailers arriving to site, cooker processing data, engineering breakdowns, abatement systems efficiency, wind data and management shift reports.

There have been no processing issues identified which are attributable to the complaints received. However, it is likely that the spike in July related to much higher temperatures during the month. In such instances, raw material decomposes much more quickly than during the winter months. There has also been an impact at abattoirs and cutting plants due to staff shortages and the nationally reported LGV driver shortage. The driver shortage has not affected Advanced Protein's fleet as they have increased their driver's payrate to ensure that the staff levels have been maintained. However, there are numerous collectors and third party hauliers who deliver raw material to the factory from customers such as abattoirs, farms, and cutting plants. There has been a trend for customers to maximise their collections over an extended period due to the shortage of third party hauliers and the increased cost of operating i.e. a 20% increase in fuel prices and drivers rates increasing by a similar percentage. The types of odours reported can vary but were predominantly raw material related.

In addition, reports had been received, and evidence noted, in relation to agricultural spreading, which will have contributed to the complaints received.

ST noted that there were no failures of the permit site-specific odour management plan (OMP).

ST explained that there had been three Schedule 5 notifications received from the Company since the last liaison meeting, which Advanced Proteins are obliged to report under their permit conditions.

One related to an entire site and local power outage of the National Grid. The oxidizers and biobeds abatement systems were reset immediately and there were no odour reports when the power blip occurred. Therefore, the situation was managed appropriately. There were no complaints received through the period of the outage.

Another Schedule 5 related to a vehicle door breakdown at the Water Treatment Plant (WTP). Although the door had broken down mechanically, the engineers were able to secure the door in the down position after a short period. There were no complaints received through the period of the outage.

The third Schedule 5 related to a water leak on a thermal oxidizer boiler system. The equipment had to be shutdown and the process air diverted to a secondary abatement system for a short period. There were no complaints received through the period of the outage.

ST added that the Company continues to proactively progress the action tracker for positive improvement projects on site.

3. Advanced Proteins Update

The Category 3 cooking process was due for a full roof replacement during the summer of 2021 but the project has been delayed due to the availability of contractors, a shortage of roof sheets (5 month lead time) and also the intention to install an upgraded fire detection system within the roof space. It is now likely that the roof project will commence in early 2022. It was agreed during the meeting that BW would inform the local community via the Company website and a mailshot prior to the work commencing. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) would also be undertaken by the Company for approval by the Environment Agency, to ensure all risks are assessed which could result in potential odour releases and that all control measures are in place to prevent any impact on the local community.

BW explained that Advanced Proteins are working through the site action tracker. The Company have recently refurbished the biobed air filtration systems to ensure optimum efficiency. Smoke testing of process buildings is also undertaken on a monthly basis to identify any weaknesses in the building extraction systems.

The Company have also been audited by the British Standards Institute (BSI) in recent months to achieve accreditation to ISO14001 Environmental Management System.

Project Update

At this point of the meeting, BW delivered a presentation to the group in relation to the previously reported Food Ingredient (FI) Project that Advanced Proteins were hoping to progress at the Cheddleton site.

The FI project is cutting edge technology which has been developed by Advanced Protein's parent company ABP in Ireland, it remains the only facility of its kind in the United Kingdom or Ireland. Furthermore, there are very few similar processes in the whole of the European Union. The project represents a substantial investment in the region of £25 million, and it would also ensure the enhancement of the existing factory in Cheddleton.

BW stressed to the group that the F.I. project must not be mistaken as animal by product 'rendering', as the processes are very different, as are the highly technical end products which are utilised by the pharmaceutical and food industries.

The scheme will provide over 30 new jobs for the local community, in highly skilled roles. It will also secure the employment of the existing factory staff. The process has very little associated odour as the raw materials are Category 3 clean beef bone which are approved by the Food Standards Agency. That said, the design of the plant includes a high efficiency odour abatement system (bio filter) as a precaution.

BW talked the group through the location plan, and also the layout of the processes and office facilities. The design has factored in the lowest point of the land which ensures that the building heights are in accordance with the existing factory to reduce any visual impact. The building design also factors the elimination of potential noise sources.

The scheme also includes a robust landscaping and biodiversity design to enhance the planting screening towards any potential houses. The planting will be mature from the outset i.e. specifically sourced trees with 10 years of natural growth.

Advanced Proteins are acutely aware that it is vital for the development to integrate mature screening. An attenuation pond is also included for rainwater run off which will deliver a sustainable bio diversity area.

Specialist consultants have been commissioned to ensure all environmental impacts have been identified and mitigated, and the Company intend to engage in a pre-planning application discussion with Staffordshire Moorlands District Council planning team before submitting a full planning application.

Community consultation is absolutely vital, therefore BW and the Project management team will be engaging with the Liaison Committee, stakeholders and also the wider community throughout the planning process. BW extended an invitation for any members of the committee, or local residents, to contact him if they would like to learn more about the project.

4. Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)

BW explained that there had been limited Company activities involving APHA/DEFRA since the last meeting. The only joint venture related to an isolated avian influenza case in Spring 2021.

The regular site APHA audits conducted since the last meeting were all positive, with zero non conformances reported.

BW agreed to speak to the APHA Stafford Office to confirm the site officer's attendance at the next meeting.

5. Trading Standards

BW confirmed that there were no spillages reported since the last meeting and no further engagement or activities during the same period.

6. Any other business

- BW has arranged for the planting of wild flowers on the grassy areas of the land on the roads to the factory for Spring 2022.
- A government response letter was received in March from Rebecca Pow (MP) which reiterated the current regulations in relation to the transportation of animal by products i.e. products must be collected and transported in sealed or leak proof containers or vehicles. JB intended to follow up to seek further clarity from the Government (DEFRA).

7. Date of next meeting

4th February 2022 at 3.00pm Location: Advanced Proteins.