



# Northumberland County Council

## MEMO

**To:** Adam Ewart - Planning Officer, Northumberland National Park Authority

**From:** Gary Park - Environmental Protection Officer, Environmental Protection Team, Public Health Protection Unit

**Date:** 17/02/2021

**Our Ref:** SRU145703

**Planning Ref:** 21NP0010

**Subject:** Provision of biomass boiler and associated building.

**Location:** Yearle House, Wooler, Northumberland, NE71 6RB.

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I refer to your consultation and attachments of 07 September June 2020:

- Householder Application for Planning Permission for Works or Extension to a Dwelling form completed by or on behalf of the applicant and dated 06/01/2021.
- Planning Design and Access Statement produced by Carter-Smith Planning, Ref: CSP/MM/YH/2101/A and dated 21<sup>st</sup> January 2021.
- Outbuilding plans & elevations as Proposed plan produced by Sullivan Associates, Project / Drawing / Rev No: 21006 / 202 / - dated Jan 2021.

### Opinion

The Public Health Protection Unit object to this proposal on the grounds of :

- Insufficient supporting information relating to air quality and noise impacts from the proposed biomass boiler.

### Commentary

The application appears to be for the repurposing of an existing outbuilding to house a biomass boiler in one room, the fuel store in another and a third one for storing a mower.

None of the application documents appear to identify the make and model of boiler to be installed, include any supporting information on noise impacts from the installation, provide any documentation on emissions or any other information on air quality impacts (principally chimney height).

Both noise and air quality are material planning considerations and the omission of any information to address these matters make it impossible to appraise these impacts from the proposed development.

### **Noise Impacts**

The principal noise source from biomass boiler installations tends to be from the feed mechanism, auger screws which can be used to draw the fuel stock from a store.

The location is likely to have a very low ambient/background noise level both during the day and especially at night. Such an installation could be markedly more obvious in terms of noise than in other locations (ie town centre).

Additionally, the proposed door to the biomass boiler room might appear to have louvres included in the doors, if this is the case these could provide a significant point of noise break-out from the building.

The applicant should submit relevant information to indicate what the noise impacts would be to the nearest noise sensitive receptors without a financial involvement or benefit from the proposed installation.

### **Air Quality Impacts**

No relevant technical details have been submitted with the application including the specification of the biomass boiler, any RHI emissions certificate for the boiler and any indication as to how the chimney height has been determined.

If the biomass boiler to be installed is less than 50 kilowatts (kW) rated output then the chimney height is specified by the building regulations.

The applicant should inform the planning officer for this application as to whether the boiler is over 50kW rated output – so they will know that this is being dealt with under legislation other than The Town and Country Planning Act.

### **Air Quality - Clean Air Act**

If the appliance is greater than 50kW then issues of air quality would normally fall to The Clean Air Act 1993 and no longer be a planning matter.

There are four aspects to the requirements under The Clean Air Act for the installation of a solid fuel biomass boiler; Notification, Grit & Dust Arrestment and Approval of Chimney Height.

A flow diagram explains the stages to assessing the information required under The Clean Air Act:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Public-Protection/Pollution/JPEG-Biomass-Boiler-Flowchart-HIGH-RES.jpg>

If the appliance is greater than 50kW then the chimney height has to be determined by some method (Environment Agency H1 calculation, modelling software such as ADMS etc.). It may be that the supplier/installer has such information or can produce it for the applicant.

The applicant should be aware that the operation of a solid fuel biomass boiler is an offence under Section 14 of The Clean Air Act 1993 as the Council has not been provided with the required information under this Act.

Please take note of the informative below - requirements under The Clean Air Act do not form any part of the planning process or this planning application. However, if the boiler is greater than 50kW rated output then information should be provided outside of this application to the Public Health Protection Unit.

### **Informatives**

#### **Biomass Boilers – Notification, Grit & Dust Arrestment and Approval of Chimney Height**

For solid fuel biomass appliances with a rated output of greater than 50kW, notification, approval of arrestment and chimney height approval is required under Section 14 of The

Clean Air Act 1993 with the Public Health Protection Unit at Northumberland County Council.

Operation of such an appliance, without agreement may be an offence under the Act. Information and an application form is available to download, complete and return from:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Protection/Pollution/Pollution.aspx#pollutioncontrol-cleanairactapproval>

For appliances rated below 50kW, the specification of chimney height may need to conform to Approved Document J and be approved by Building Control:

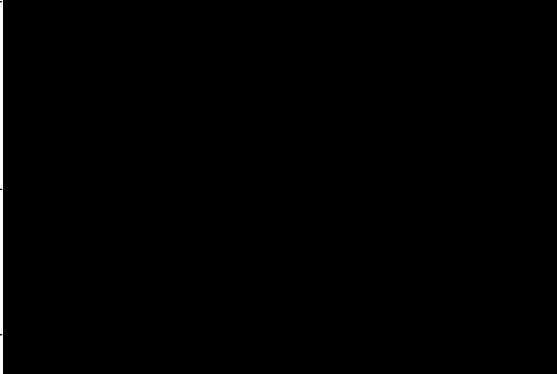
<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/approveddocuments/partj/approved>

**Please note that this requirement for biomass boiler information does not form part of your application or the decision for your planning permission.**

### Statutory Nuisance

The effectiveness of the development's design in ensuring that a nuisance is not created, is the responsibility of the applicant / developer and their professional advisors / consultants. Developers should, therefore, fully appreciate the importance of obtaining competent professional advice.

In all cases, the Council retains its rights under Section 79 of the Environment Protection Act 1990, in respect of the enforcement of Statutory Nuisance.

	Name	Signature
Prepared by	Gary Park	
Checked by	David Lathan	