

## 2 Project Description

### 2.1 Introduction

The Applicant, Cycle0 (IE) Limited, proposes to develop Renewable Biogas Facility (herein referred to as the Proposed Development) on a site located in the townland of Glenloughaun, Co. Galway.

This chapter will provide a detailed description of the Proposed Development and the key processes therein.

#### 2.1.1 Description of the Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises the construction of an anaerobic digestion facility to produce renewable biomethane, CO<sub>2</sub> (which will be captured), and a bio-based fertiliser from organic material. The total gross floor area (GFA) of the proposed development (including internal plant areas and ancillary structures) will be c. 2,908.5 sq.m. The development is a renewable energy development which is covered by the provisions of the Renewable Energy Directive III.

The development will consist of the following:

- Demolition and site clearance works including the removal of an existing shed (with a GFA of c. 126.8 sq.m), and adjacent hard standing areas and tank structure, located centrally on the site.
- Construction of 2 no. primary digesters (with an overall height of c. 12.1m), a pump house (with a GFA of c. 115.3 sq.m), and 2 no. post digester tanks (with an overall height of c. 12.1m), located in the northwestern section of the site.
- Construction of 2 no. prepits (c. 4.3m in height), a pasteurisation buffer tank (c. 4.3m in height), and a pasteurisation unit (with a maximum height of c. 4.2m), located to south of the primary digesters, within the western section of the site.
- Construction of a digestate storage tank (c. 16.4m in height) located centrally on site, to the southeast of the primary and post digester tanks.
- Construction of a digestate treatment building and a feedstock reception building (with a height of c. 12.1m and a GFA of c. 1,703.7 sq.m) with an odour abatement system (with a height of c. 13m to top of odour abatement stack), located in the southwestern section of site.
- Construction of combined heat and power (CHP ) unit (c. 2.6m in height and c. 5.6m in height to flue, with a GFA of c. 38.53 sq.m), a biogas boiler (c. 2.6m in height and c. 5.6m in height to flue, with a GFA of c. 12.74 sq.m), a backup boiler (c. 2.6m in height), and a gas treatment system (c. 4.2m in height), located in the southeast section of the site.
- Construction of a CO<sub>2</sub> liquefactor (with an overall height of c. 10.7m to top of storage vessels), and an emergency/ safety flare (c. 11.3m in height), a grid injection unit (with a height of c. 2.8m and a GFA of c. 21.7 sq.m), a fuel storage tank (c. 2m in height), and a propane tank compound accommodating 2 no. propane tanks (c. 1.6m in height), located in the southern section of the site.
- Construction of roofed silage clamps (with a GFA of c. 665.7 sq.m and a height of c. 8.7m), located centrally on site.
- Construction of a two storey office building (with a GFA of c. 327.4 sq.m and a height of c. 11m) and an ESB substation (with a GFA of c. 23.5 sq.m and a height of c. 3.4m), within the eastern section of the site, adjacent to the site entrance.

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- Alterations to the adjacent local road frontage including improved access arrangements and boundary setback to allow for improved access and safety.
- Associated and ancillary works including parking (8 no. standard, 3 no. EV and 1 no. accessible parking spaces and bike storage for 12 no. bikes), a weighbridge, solar PV arrays at roof level, wastewater treatment equipment, bunding and surface treatments, attenuation pond, boundary treatments, lighting, services, drainage, landscaping, and all associated and ancillary works.

## 2.1.2 Site Location

### General

The Proposed Development site (herein referred to as 'the site') is located in the townland of Glenloughaun, approximately 3 km south of Ballinasloe, Co. Galway, 25 km south-west of Athlone, Co. Westmeath, and 50 km east of Galway City. The approximate centre of the site is located at Irish National Grid Reference M 83484 27178 and Irish Transverse Mercator (ITM) 583436, 727203.

An overview of the site location is provided in **Figure 2.1**.



**Figure 2.1:** Site Location

The total site area measures approximately 4.0 ha. The site is partially brownfield in nature, comprising existing hardstanding and buildings, and is currently used as agricultural pastureland. It is bounded to the north, south, east and west predominantly by agricultural land,

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with a small number of one-off residential properties and farm buildings in the surrounding area.

An existing meat-processing facility is located immediately adjacent to the northern and eastern boundaries of the site, and the existing entrance serving this facility will be shared with the Proposed Development. A concrete supplier (Whytes Concrete) is located approximately 315 m east-south-east of the site along the R355 regional road. Ballinasloe Rugby Club is located approximately 660 m north of the site and Ballinasloe Golf Club is located approximately 815 m north-north-east of the site (see **Figure 2.1**). The Ballinure River flows to the south of the site.

The site is located along Glenloughaun Road (L-8412), which connects with the R355 regional road immediately to the east of the site. The M6 motorway can be accessed from the R355 approximately 2 km north of the site. The Proposed Development will be accessed via Glenloughaun Road (L-8412) using the existing entrance.

## Topography

The site lies at a topographical elevation of approximately 50 mOD. Ground levels in the vicinity of the site generally fall to the south towards the Ballinure River, which has an elevation of approximately 42 mOD at Ballinure Bridge. The Ballinure River flows from west to east and joins the River Suck approximately 6 km downstream to the east. The north-western portion of the site banks steeply up towards the existing Glenloughaun Road, which fronts the northern boundary of the development. Across the site, levels generally grade towards the south-east, corresponding with the existing field drainage regime associated with its current agricultural use.

The proposed approach road for the development will be the R355 regional road, located immediately to the east of the site; Ground levels along the local road at the junction with the R355 and at the site access are approximately 48 mOD.

## Proximity to Designated Sites

The Proposed Development is not located within, or immediately adjacent to, any site designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EU Habitats Directive or Birds Directive. The closest European site is Glenloughaun Esker SAC (Site Code: 002213), located approximately 740 m west of the Proposed Development.

Within a 15 km zone of influence of the application site, there are seven Natura 2000 sites. Of these, four sites (two SPAs and two SACs) are considered to have potential source–pathway–receptor (S–P–R) linkages with the Proposed Development (refer to Chapter 5: Biodiversity). The European sites considered are illustrated in **Figure 2.2**.

An appraisal of the potential effects of the Proposed Development on the qualifying interests and conservation objectives of European sites within 15 km is presented in the Natura Impact Statement (NIS) that accompanies this planning application.

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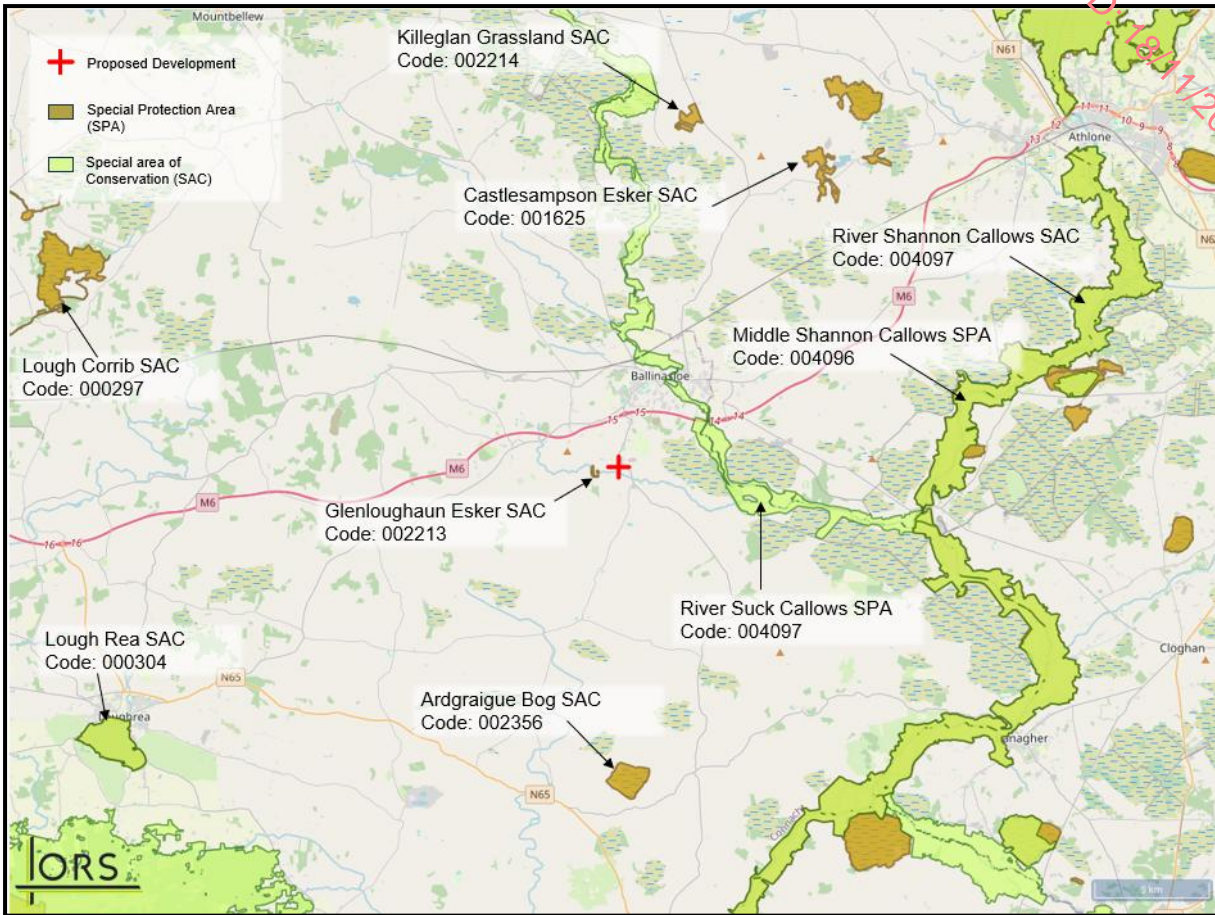


Figure 2.2: Map of Natura 2000 Sites within 15km of the Proposed Site

**Habitat**

No part of the Proposed Development site lies within, nor is it immediately adjacent to, any area designated for nature conservation purposes. Habitats within the site range from low to high biodiversity value at a local scale, although the majority of the area comprises habitats of relatively low ecological value.

The habitats within the Proposed Development site have been evaluated and are characterised as dry calcareous and neutral grassland, wet grassland, improved agricultural grassland, recolonising bare ground, drainage ditches, and hedgerows and treelines.

The improved agricultural grassland and recolonising bare ground habitats are highly modified and are considered to be of low ecological value. The site is bordered by hedgerows and treelines, which are of high ecological value at a local scale; these features are to be retained and incorporated into the project design. Drainage ditches border the southern and eastern boundaries of the site and are hydraulically connected to the Ballinure River. The wet grassland and dry calcareous and neutral grassland are considered to be of high ecological value at a local scale; however, they are not protected habitats and no protected or rare species were recorded during site surveys.

Overall, the biodiversity and ecology of the Proposed Development site are assessed as being of low conservation importance at a wider level, with habitat values ranging from low to high at a local scale. The hedgerows and treelines within and bounding the site represent the most important biodiversity features, providing suitable nesting habitat for birds and contributing to local ecological networks. Their retention will allow these ecological functions to continue.

In terms of designated sites (Natura 2000), a potential hydrological linkage has been identified between the site and the River Suck Callows SPA, River Shannon Callows SAC and Middle Shannon Callows SPA via the Ballinure River, which joins the River Suck approximately 6.6 km to the east and ultimately the River Shannon after a further approximately 6.3 km. Glenloughaun Esker SAC has also been screened in as having a potential source–pathway–receptor linkage due to its proximity to the Proposed Development. Accordingly, a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been prepared, in which mitigation measures are proposed to ensure that no adverse effects on the integrity of these Natura 2000 sites will arise.

## Surface Water

The primary surface-water feature in the vicinity of the Proposed Development is the Ballinure River (waterbody name: Ballinure\_10), located approximately 135 m south-east of the site boundary. A field drainage ditch runs along the southern and eastern boundaries of the site and discharges to the Ballinure River approximately 150 m south of the site boundary. The Ballinure River then flows eastwards, joining the Cloonatoragh River (waterbody name: Ballinure\_20) after a further approximately 3.4 km, before eventually flowing into the River Suck (waterbody name: Suck\_160) approximately 7 km east of the site.

The site lies within the Upper Shannon hydrometric area (26) and catchment (26D), the Suck\_SC\_100 sub-catchment (26D\_3) and the Ballinure\_010 sub-basin.

### 2.1.3 Site Layout

The site layout is displayed in **Figure 2.3**. Detailed site layout and structural drawings are included in **Volume IV: Drawings**.

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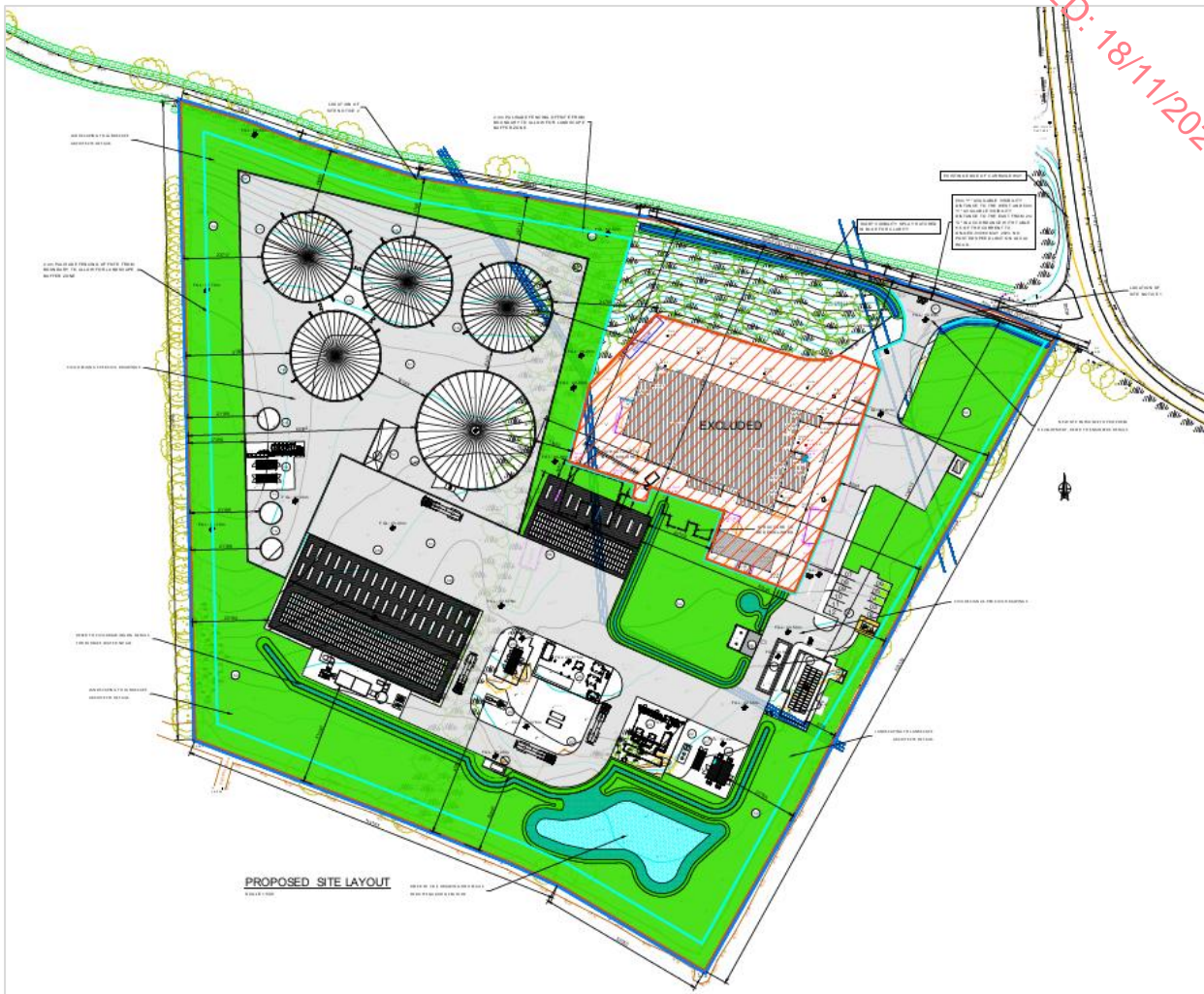


Figure 2.3: Proposed Site Layout Plan. (ORS Drawing ref: 231240-ORS-ZZ-00-DR-AR-200)

### 2.1.4 3D Image of the Site Layout

A 3D model image of the proposed site layout is presented in **Figure 2.4**.

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Figure 2.3: 3D Image of Site Layout

## 2.2 Process and Design Description

The key processes and design details illustrated in Error! Reference source not found. and Figure 2.3 above are described in detail in the following sections.

### 2.2.1 Summary Process Flow Diagram

A summary process flow diagram is presented in Figure 2.5.

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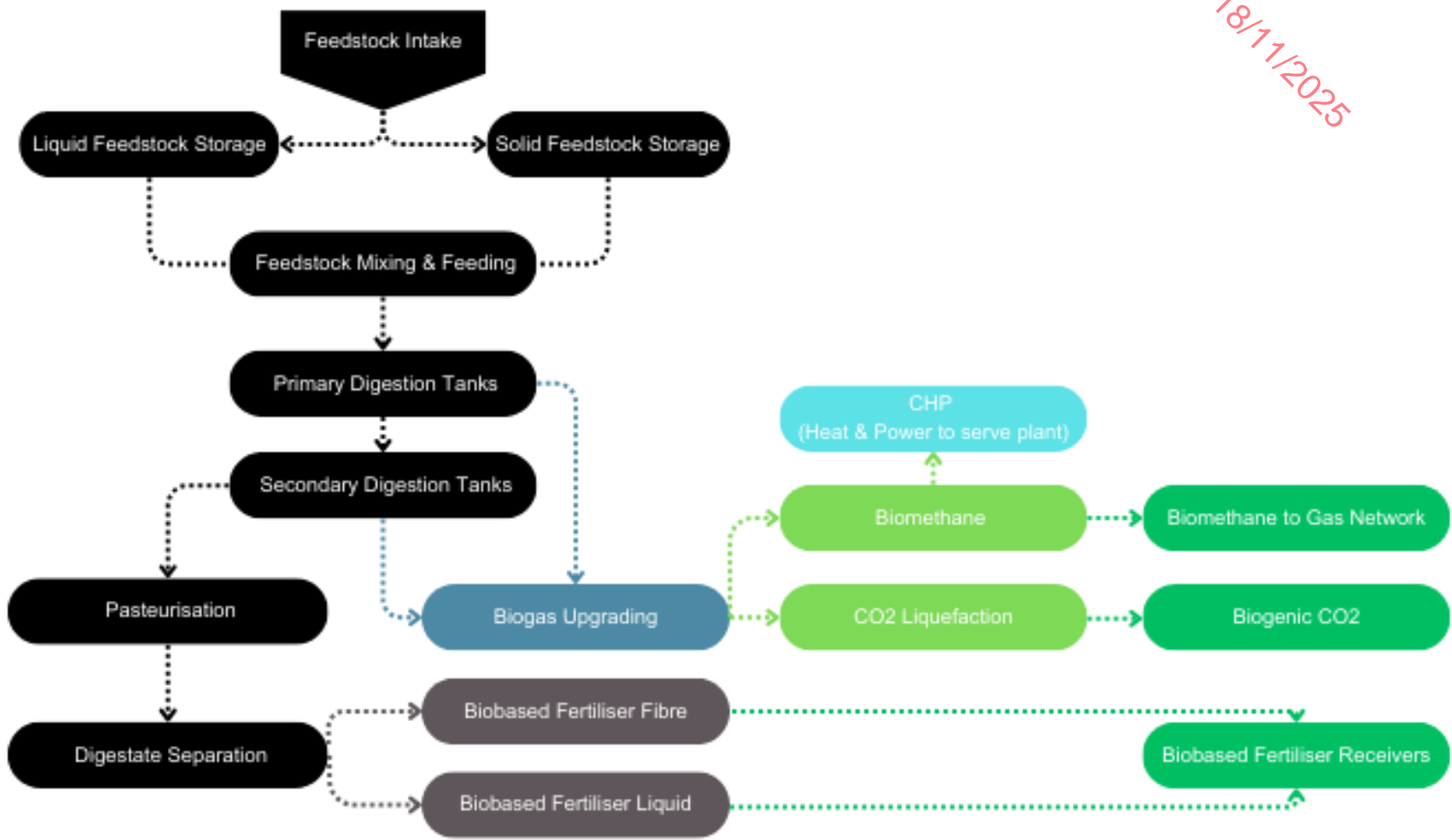


Figure 2.5: Process Flow

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**2.2.2 Plant Components**

The plant components are listed in **Table 2.3** below. Detailed drawings showing design, layout and dimensions of components referenced are presented in the Planning Drawings that accompany this EIAR.

**Table 2.3: Key Plant Components and Process**

Drawing Ref.	Item	Details
01	Entrance Gate	Site entrance with 1.8 metre high security gate.
02	Car Park	Staff and visitor parking, providing 12no. vehicle parking spaces. Including 3no. EV charging points parking spaces, 1no. disabled access parking space and bicycle storage.
03	Weighbridge	Weighbridge facility to record incoming feedstock delivery tonnages and outgoing biobased fertiliser tonnages.
04	Office	Site Office including Reception Entrance Area, Operational Room, Accessible Shower Room, WC, Welfare Facilities, IT Room and Storage on the Ground Floor. Offices, Meeting Room, Canteen and Laboratory on the First Floor.
05	ESB Substation	Substation to allow for import of back-up electricity when required. Including transformers used to transform incoming electricity from high to low voltage.
06	Roofed Silage Clamps	Silage storage clamp with roof, including roof mounted Solar PV array.
07	Fuel Tank	1,000 litre capacity self-bunded fuel storage for refuelling of site plant and machinery.
08	Digestate Treatment Building	Digestate Treatment Building will provide enclosed storage of pasteurised and separated solid digestate fibre. Digestate Fibre will be recovered during separation treatment.
09	Feedstock Reception Building & Odour Abatement System	Reception Hall accommodating solid waste reception, storage area and quarantine area. Maintained under negative pressure with adjoining Odour Treatment System.  An Odour Treatment System to collect and treat all odours arising from potentially odorous activities occurring on site.
10	Pre Pit 01	Liquid feedstock intake and storage, prior to feeding.
11	Pre Pit 02	
12	Primary Digester 01	Primary Digesters are constructed using pour in-situ concrete, featuring walls measuring 8m in height and 28m in diameter. Each Primary Digester has a liquid volume capacity of 4,950 m <sup>3</sup> .
13	Primary Digester 02	Each Digester is equipped with a double membrane gas collection dome with a biogas storage capacity of ca. 1,300 Nm <sup>3</sup> .
14	Pump House	Accommodation for pumping equipment and pipework for the transfer of liquid feedstock and digestate materials.

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15	Secondary Digester 01	Secondary Digesters are constructed using pour in-situ concrete, featuring walls measuring 8m in height and 28m in diameter. Each secondary digester has a liquid volume capacity of 4,950 m <sup>3</sup> .
16	Secondary Digester 02	Each Digester is equipped with a double membrane gas collection dome with a biogas storage capacity of ca. 1,300 Nm <sup>3</sup> .
17	Digestate Storage Tank	Storage tank providing a storage capacity of 8,150m <sup>3</sup> for treated Liquid Digestate.
18	Pasteurisation Buffer Tank	Buffer tank providing storage capacity for Digestate prior to pasteurisation.
19	Pasteurisation Unit	Insulated pasteurisation tanks which will provide treatment of the digestate material to ABP standard.
20	CHP	2no.250KW capacity containerised CHP units and panel room. CHPs utilising biomethane generated on site to produce heat for the digestion process.
21	Biogas Boiler	1no. containerised biomethane boiler, which will provide backup heat utilising biomethane generated on site.
22	Backup Boiler	1no. containerised biomethane boiler, which will provide emergency backup heat utilising biomethane generated on site.
23	Biogas Treatment System	Containerised biogas upgrading system to upgrade biogas to biomethane.
24	Safety Flare	1 no. enclosed gas flare serving as additional safety measure. Flare will only operate under distinct scenarios to ensure safety and compliance.
25	Grid Injection Unit	The Grid Injection Unit (GIU) comprises equipment which will ensure that the biomethane is compliant with all necessary standards and regulations before it enters the local gas network.
26	CO2 Liquefaction System	CO2 liquefaction system to recover CO2 from the biogas upgrading process.
27	Propane Tank Compound	Supply of propane to enhance CV of biomethane when necessary.
50	Landscaping	Landscaping and native tree planting scheme.
51	Concrete Apron	Yard area of concrete construction.
52	Bund Walls	The bund will be impermeable and provide the required storage volume i.e., a minimum of 110% of the largest single tank volume.
53	Bund Ramp	Ramp to banded area to provide maintenance vehicle access.
54	Canteen & Toilet Wastewater Treatment	Wastewater treatment and percolation for wastewater from canteen and toilet facilities.
55	Perimeter Fencing	1.8 metre high palisade fencing surrounding the site.

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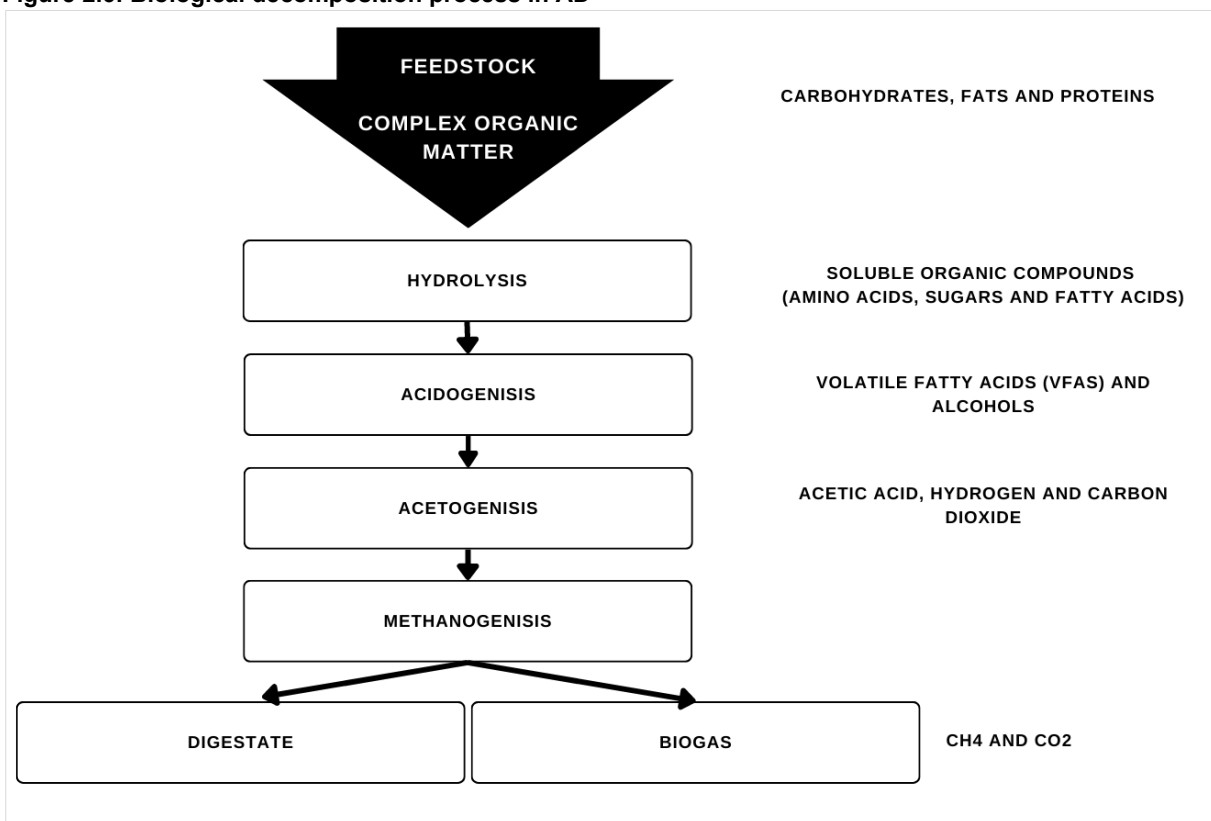
**2.2.3 Anaerobic Digestion Process**

Anaerobic Digestion (AD) is a natural biological decomposition process which takes place in an oxygen-free environment, where micro-organisms (bacteria and archaea) break down organic matter. There are four main stages to this process:

- Hydrolysis - large, complex polymers like carbohydrates, cellulose, proteins, and fats are broken down by hydrolytic enzymes into soluble monomers i.e., amino acids from proteins, long chain fatty acids from lipids, and simple sugars from complex carbohydrates.
- Acidogenesis – these soluble monomers are further broken down into short chain volatile fatty acids (VFAs), alcohols, carbon dioxide and hydrogen.
- Acetogenesis - the products of acidogenesis are broken down into acetate, releasing hydrogen and carbon dioxide.
- Methanogenesis – In this final stage of AD, various groups of methanogenic bacteria consume acetate, hydrogen and carbon dioxide and convert these intermediate products into CH<sub>4</sub>.

The biological decomposition stages are illustrated in **Figure 2.6**.

**Figure 2.6: Biological decomposition process in AD**



**2.2.4 Biogas**

Biogas is the product of this complex biological decomposition of organic materials, mainly consisting of 55-70% by volume methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), 30-45% carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), together with traces of other gases, i.e., nitrogen (N<sub>2</sub>), hydrogen (H<sub>2</sub>), hydrogen sulphide (H<sub>2</sub>S), ammonia

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(NH<sub>3</sub>), as well as water vapour. The exact composition of biogas is dependent on the type of feedstock being digested.

Biogas can be 'upgraded' to pure methane, often called biomethane, by removing CO<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>S, moisture and other trace gases. The biogas upgrading process produces a purified stream of biomethane, which can then be injected into the main gas grid. The upgrading process also produces a CO<sub>2</sub> rich gas stream which can be recovered for treatment within a CO<sub>2</sub> liquefaction system to produce renewable liquefied CO<sub>2</sub>.

Based on the feedstock composition and design operating capacity, it is projected that the facility will be capable of producing 510-580 Nm<sup>3</sup> of biomethane per hour.

**2.2.5 Feedstock**

The Proposed Development is designed to process up to 90,000 tonnes per annum of feedstock, primarily comprising locally sourced agricultural manures, slurries, food processing residues, and crop-based materials. **Table 2.4** below provides an indicative breakdown of feedstock types and estimated annual tonnages. These figures are subject to variation based on market conditions, seasonal availability, and feedstock quality. However, the total annual feedstock quantity will not exceed 90,000 tonnes.

**Table 2.4: Estimated Annual Feedstock Composition and Intake**

Feedstock	Tonnes/Annum
Chicken Manure	3,000
Cattle Manure	6,000
Cattle Slurry	25,000
Pig Slurry	30,000
Crops	7,000
Grass Silage	15,000
Belly Grass	1,000
Distillery Waste	1,500
Dairy Processing Waste	1,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>90,000</b>

The agricultural manures, slurries, and crop-based feedstocks will be sourced from nearby agricultural operators.

To date, the applicant has engaged with a large number of local farmers, 50 of whom have confirmed their agreement to supply feedstock to the Proposed Development. In return, these suppliers will receive bio-based fertiliser produced by the facility. Letters of support from the feedstock suppliers and fertiliser recipients have been compiled and are submitted with the Planning Statement accompanying this application.

**Figure 2.7** illustrates the geographical distribution of these feedstock suppliers and fertiliser recipients. Of the 50 confirmed sources, 72% (36) are located within a 15 km radius of the site, and all are within a 30 km radius.

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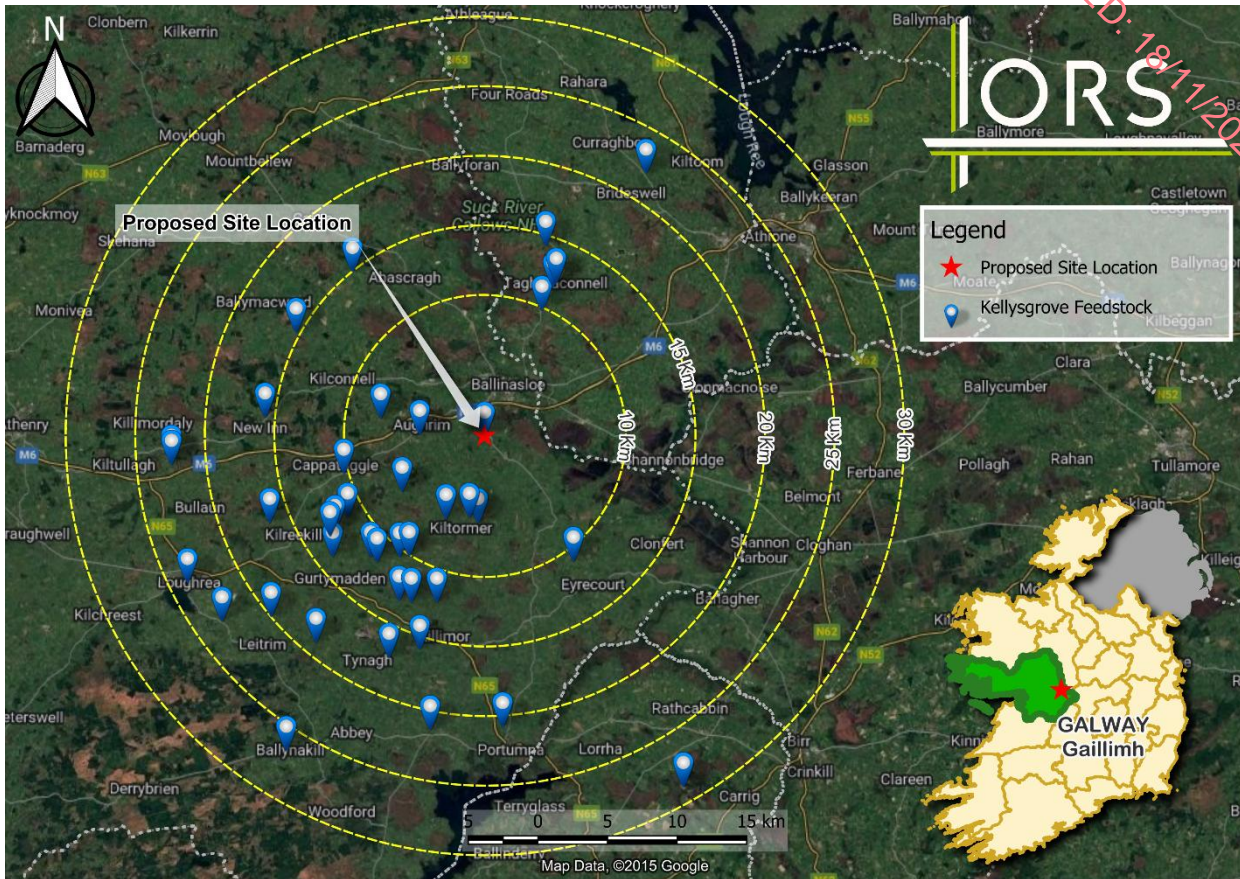


Figure 2.4: Feedstock Suppliers and Digestate Receivers

### 2.2.6 Feedstock Acceptance and Storage Procedure

Feedstock will be transported to the Proposed Development using heavy goods vehicles (HGVs), enclosed trailers, and sealed vacuum tankers. Only feedstocks that meet strict acceptance criteria and comply with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine (DAFM) licensing conditions will be accepted. All suppliers are required to complete a Feedstock Acceptance Agreement (FAA) and notify the weighbridge operator at least 24 hours before delivery.

Upon arrival, feedstock deliveries will be weighed and logged at the weighbridge located at the site entrance, in compliance with EPA and DAFM regulatory requirements. Hauler drivers will then proceed to the site office to review and submit the required commercial documentation for feedstock transport. A visual inspection of the feedstocks will also be conducted to ensure compliance with the FAA.

Once delivery and documentation are verified, vehicles will be directed to the Reception Hall for further processing.

### 2.2.7 Weighbridge

All vehicles delivering feedstock to or exporting digestate from the facility will use a weighbridge located at the site entrance, adjacent to the site office. The weighbridge data management system will automatically record all vehicle weights. Constructed from steel and mounted on

load cells, the weighbridge will be housed within a reinforced concrete pit chamber.

The weighbridge is shown as **item 03** on Site Layout Drawing Ref. **231960-ORS-Z0-00-DR-B-200**.

## 2.2.8 Feedstock Reception Building

The Feedstock Reception Building will be constructed with a steel frame, composite PVC-coated cladding, concrete flooring, and retaining walls equipped with rapid-closing doors. The building will include a ventilation and odour abatement system designed to maintain negative air pressure, minimizing the release of fugitive odours. This integrated system—comprising high-speed roller shutter doors, building ventilation, and odour abatement measures—will effectively control fugitive emissions. Pedestrian doors will be provided to ensure safe access and egress for personnel. All liquids and washings will be contained within the Reception Hall and returned to the process.

Upon arrival at the Reception Hall, drivers will reverse their vehicles into the building. High-speed roller shutter doors will open to allow entry and will promptly close before the discharge of materials.

Liquid feedstocks, such as slurries, will be discharged from within the Feedstock Reception Building into Pre-Pit 01 and Pre-Pit 02, each with a capacity of 150 m<sup>3</sup>. These pre-pit tanks will be constructed from concrete and located within a bunded area for additional containment. Solid feedstocks will be unloaded into three designated feedstock bays, which provide a total storage capacity of 750 tonnes - equivalent to five days of storage.

Before exiting the building, all vehicles will undergo external cleaning using a power hose. Once cleaned, rapid-closing doors will reopen to facilitate the vehicle's departure. The vehicle will then return to the office and weighbridge for re-weighing before exiting the site.

The Feedstock Reception Building is shown as **item 09** on Site Layout Drawing Ref. **231960-ORS-ZZ-00-DR-AR-200**.

## 2.2.9 Odour Treatment System

An Odour Treatment System will recover and treat all odours arising from potentially odorous activities occurring on site. All potential odour sources, including the Feedstock Reception Building, Digestate Treatment Building, Pre-Pit 01, Pre-Pit 02 and the Pasteurisation Tasks are connected to the Odour Treatment System. In the event of a grant of licence by the EPA to carry out activities that require such a licence, it is expected that odour emission rates will be agreed as part of such a licence.

The Feedstock Reception Building has a volume of ca. 10,547 m<sup>3</sup> and Digestate Treatment Building discussed below has a volume of ca 8,432 m<sup>3</sup>. The ventilation and odour abatement system will be designed to achieve a minimum of three (3) air changes per hour which corresponds to a flowrate of 56,940m<sup>3</sup>/hour, providing adequate air changes in accordance with BAT.

Following a comprehensive review of Best Available Techniques (BAT) and odour abatement technologies, the applicant has adopted multi-stage treatment technology. This technology uses a combination of Ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) Scrubbing and Activated Carbon Filtration to achieve

high levels of odour removal.

## Ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) Scrubbing

An NH<sub>3</sub> Scrubber is used for efficient NH<sub>3</sub> removal consisting of a reaction vessel with packing and liquid distributor and spray system. The exit route from the packed column includes a demister for removing entrained liquid droplets. Water conditioned with weak sulphuric acid is used as the scrubbing liquid, reacting with the ammonia to form ammonium sulphate.

## Activated Carbon Filtration

Activated Carbon Filters act as a polishing step in the odour treatment process prior to discharge to the atmosphere via the stack.

The Odour Treatment System is shown as **item 09** on Site Layout Drawing Ref. **231960-ORS-Z0-00-DR-AR-200**

### 2.2.10 Pre-Pit 02 and Pre-Pit 02

The Pre-Pit tanks will provide intake storage of liquid feedstocks prior to processing.

Pre-Pit 01 and Pre-Pit 02 are shown as **items 10 and 11** on Site Layout Drawing Ref. **231960-ORS-ZZ-00-DR-AR-200**.

### 2.2.11 Primary and Post Digestion

In a two-stage anaerobic digestion (AD) process, digestion occurs sequentially in primary digestion and post digestion tanks. This process will be facilitated by four Continuously Stirred Tank Reactor (CSTR) tanks:

- 2 Primary Digestion Tanks
- 2 Post Digestion Tanks

#### Primary Digestion Tanks

The Primary Digestion Tanks will be constructed using reinforced concrete, with walls and bases designed to ensure durability and efficient operation. Each tank will have a capacity of 4,950 m<sup>3</sup>.

Each Primary Digestion Tank will feature a double membrane gas collection system. This flexible, sealed twin-membrane structure will enable low-pressure gas capture and temporary storage, accommodating fluctuations in gas generation. The system consists of:

- I. An inner membrane for temporary biogas storage.
- II. An outer membrane containing low-pressure air maintained at slightly higher pressure to ensure biogas flows to its destination (e.g., the Biogas Upgrade Unit).

The biogas storage capacity of each double membrane system is 1,300 Nm<sup>3</sup>.

Primary Digestion Tanks are shown as **items 12 and 13** on Site Layout Drawing Ref. **231960-ORS-ZZ-00-DR-AR-200**.

## Post Digestion Tanks

The Post Digestion Tanks will be constructed using reinforced concrete, with walls and bases designed for durability and efficient operation.

Each Post Digestion Tank will have a volume capacity of 4,950 m<sup>3</sup> and will be equipped with a double membrane gas collection system. This system will provide a biogas storage capacity of 1,300 Nm<sup>3</sup>.

The Post Digestion Tanks are shown as **items 15 and 16** on Site Layout Drawing Ref. **231960-ORS-ZZ-00-DR-AR-200**.

## Digestion Mixing

The Digestion Tanks will be fitted with mechanical mixers that use a series of paddles driven by externally mounted units. This configuration is designed to ensure thorough mixing and homogenization of the tank contents.

The mixers are sized based on the substrate's specific characteristics, including dry matter content and viscosity. This tailored approach ensures optimal mixing efficiency, aligning with the specific requirements of the digestion process.

## Digestion Temperature

The temperature in both the primary and secondary digestion tanks is maintained within the mesophilic range of 37-42°C. Each tank is heated using integrated water heating pipework embedded in the tank walls. The Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system monitors and controls the temperature, ensuring that the digesters consistently operate within this optimal range.

### 2.2.12 Pasteurisation System

The Pasteurisation System is designed to minimise the risks from microbiological hazards. The EU pasteurisation standard uses indicator organisms to;

- verify that pasteurisation achieves the required reductive effect on pathogens and,
- verify that no cross contamination between untreated ABP feedstock and digestate product occurs.

The EU pasteurisation standard requires that all the digestate material is simultaneously held at 70°C or above for a minimum of 60 continuous minutes. The use of this pasteurisation standard reduces pathogens to levels at which they do not pose a risk, ensuring that all digestate end products (Digestate Liquid and Fibre) are safe to handle and use.

In accordance with Animal By-product (ABP) Regulations all organic material must also be mechanically treated to ensure all particles are less than 12mm in size. This will be achieved through a screening and maceration pump prior to pasteurisation.

The Pasteurisation System will comprise the following items:

- 3 no. enclosed pasteurisation tanks

- Heat exchanger (with heat provided by the CHPs/Biomethane Boiler)
- 1 no. maceration and screening pump (12mm)

Digestate from the Secondary Digestion Tank will be fed using enclosed pipework via the macerator and pump system to the 3 no. pasteurisation tanks. Pasteurisation will take place independent of the digestion system, in a batch process. By utilising 3 no. pasteurisation tanks in parallel it is possible to operate the pasteurisation system on a sequential batch basis with one tank filling, one processing and one emptying.

The digestate will be circulated by a pump system through a heat exchanger which will raise the temperature to greater than 70°C. The heating process will cease once the desired process temperature is achieved but material will continue to be maintained at temperature and agitated within the pasteurisation tank for a minimum of 60 minutes.

The pasteurisation tanks will each be equipped with 3no. temperature probes and ultrasonic level indicators to provide evidence to regulatory authorities that all material is kept above the minimum temperature (70°C) for the required minimum period of 60 minutes, therefore meeting the legal time and temperature standards.

The Pasteurisation System will be equipped with a datalogging system that will allow real-time thermographs to be produced via a SCADA system. The datalogging system and thermographs produced will be tamperproof.

The Pasteurisation System (**item 19**) is shown on Site Layout Drawing Ref. **231960-ORS-Z0-00-DR-B-200**.

### 2.2.13 Digestate Treatment Building

The Digestate Treatment Building houses the Digestate Separation System. After pasteurisation, digestate is transferred via sealed pipework to the building for the separation process, which produces two outputs: solid digestate fibre and liquid digestate.

The building will be equipped with a ventilation system connected to the odour abatement system, designed to maintain negative air pressure. This integrated system, consisting of high-speed roller shutter doors, building ventilation, and odour abatement, will effectively control fugitive emissions. All liquids and washings within the Digestate Treatment Building will be contained and returned to the process.

The Digestate Separation System is designed to treat a minimum of 78,000 tonnes of whole digestate per annum. Following treatment, approximately 24,500 tonnes of digestate fibre and 53,500 tonnes of liquid digestate will be produced.

#### Screwpress Separation

The screwpress, comprising a rotating screw and mechanical screen, separates the digestate into a solid and liquid fraction. The solid fraction (solid digestate fibre) is passed through the separator and is collected in the enclosed storage bay below. The liquid fraction is then pumped to the Digestate Storage Tank.

The Digestate Treatment Building is shown as **item 08** on Site Layout Drawing Ref. **231960-ORS-Z0-00-DR-B-200**.

## 2.2.14 Digestate Storage

### Digestate Liquid Storage

The site possesses a total storage capacity of 18,050m<sup>3</sup> (1no. Digestate Storage Tank and 1no. Post Digestion Tank) for digestate liquid. It is projected that ca. 53,500m<sup>3</sup> of digestate liquid will be produced annually after complete digestate separation.

With onsite storage capacity amounting to 18,050m<sup>3</sup>, there is sufficient storage to accommodate volume for up to 18 weeks.

### Digestate Fibre Storage

Solid digestate fibre will be housed in the dedicated Digestate Treatment Building. The building is vented to the Odour Treatment System which will recover and treat all odours arising from within.

The Digestate Storage Tank and Digestate Treatment Building are shown as **items 17 and 08** on Site Layout Drawing Ref. **231960-ORS-Z0-00-DR-B-200**.

## 2.2.15 Digestate Quality and Volume

The digestate produced will meet the quality and end-of-waste requirements of an agreed quality standard, such as Article 28 End of Waste, PAS110, or another standard approved by the regulator. It will also comply with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) transformation parameters and testing requirements, as outlined in CN 11: Approval and Operation of Biogas Plants Transforming Animal By-Products and Derived Products in Ireland (DAFM, 2014).

Both digestate liquid and fibre will be classified as bio-based fertilisers, suitable for use on agricultural land as a replacement for chemical or mineral fertilisers. These products will primarily be returned to lands associated with feedstock supplies of crop and/or slurry, promoting a local circular bioeconomy. Digestate receivers will manage the storage and application of the bio-based fertiliser in accordance with S.I. No. 113 of 2022: European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2022.

With an annual feedstock processing capacity of 90,000 tonnes, approximately 78,000 tonnes of whole digestate will be generated. Following treatment and separation, approximately 53,500 tonnes of liquid digestate and 24,500 tonnes of solid digestate fibre will be produced per annum.

Post-pasteurisation, the digestate will meet End of Waste requirements, such as Article 28 or PAS110, or other relevant standards as agreed with the regulator.

## 2.2.16 Biomethane Boiler

The proposal includes 1No. 500kW containerised biomethane boiler, which will provide emergency backup heat when the CHP is unavailable. The boiler will utilise biomethane generated on site to produce heat for the digestion process.

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The 1No. Biomethane Boiler is shown as **item 22** on Site Layout Drawing Ref. **231960-ORS-Z0-00-DR-B-200**.

## 2.2.17 Fuel Storage

1 no. 1,000 litre above ground fuel tank will be located within a bunded area on site and used for refuelling on site plant and equipment.

This Fuel Storage is shown as **item 07** on Site Layout Drawing Ref. **231960-ORS-Z0-00-DR-B-200**.

## 2.2.18 CHP Units

The Proposed Development includes 2no. 250KWe capacity containerised CHP units. Biogas will be utilised to generate electricity to power the site parasitic load, and to supply heat for the primary and secondary digester tanks, pasteurisation, biogas upgrading and CO<sub>2</sub> liquefaction processes.

The CHP units are shown as **item 20** on Site Layout Drawing Ref. **231960-ORS-Z0-00-DR-B-200**.

## 2.2.19 Biogas Upgrading

Biogas upgrading removes trace impurities in the biogas stream. The primary goal is to separate carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) to produce renewable biomethane and CO<sub>2</sub>. The proposed Biogas Upgrading Unit will recover over 99.9% of the biomethane present in untreated biogas by separating CO<sub>2</sub> from the biogas through the following process.

Initially, biogas is filtered through a series of activated carbon filters. This filtration process aims to eliminate any remaining hydrogen sulphide or trace volatile organic compounds (VOCs) generated during the breakdown of organic material in the anaerobic digestion process. Subsequently, the biogas proceeds through a biogas upgrading module, featuring a selective permeable membrane. Here, carbon dioxide passes through the membrane while methane gas is retained, resulting in an upgraded biogas known as biomethane. Notably, biomethane attains a molecular composition equivalent to natural gas.

The Biogas Upgrading Unit is shown as **item 23** on Site Layout Drawing Ref. **231240-ORS-Z0-00-DR-B-200**.

## 2.2.20 Grid Injection Unit

Biomethane will be supplied to the existing gas network via the onsite Grid Injection Unit (GIU) and pipeline connecting the site to the existing medium pressure distribution gas pipeline located ca. 2.7km north of the site at Brackernagh, Ballinasloe (**Figure 3**). The GIU will be owned and operated by Gas Networks Ireland.

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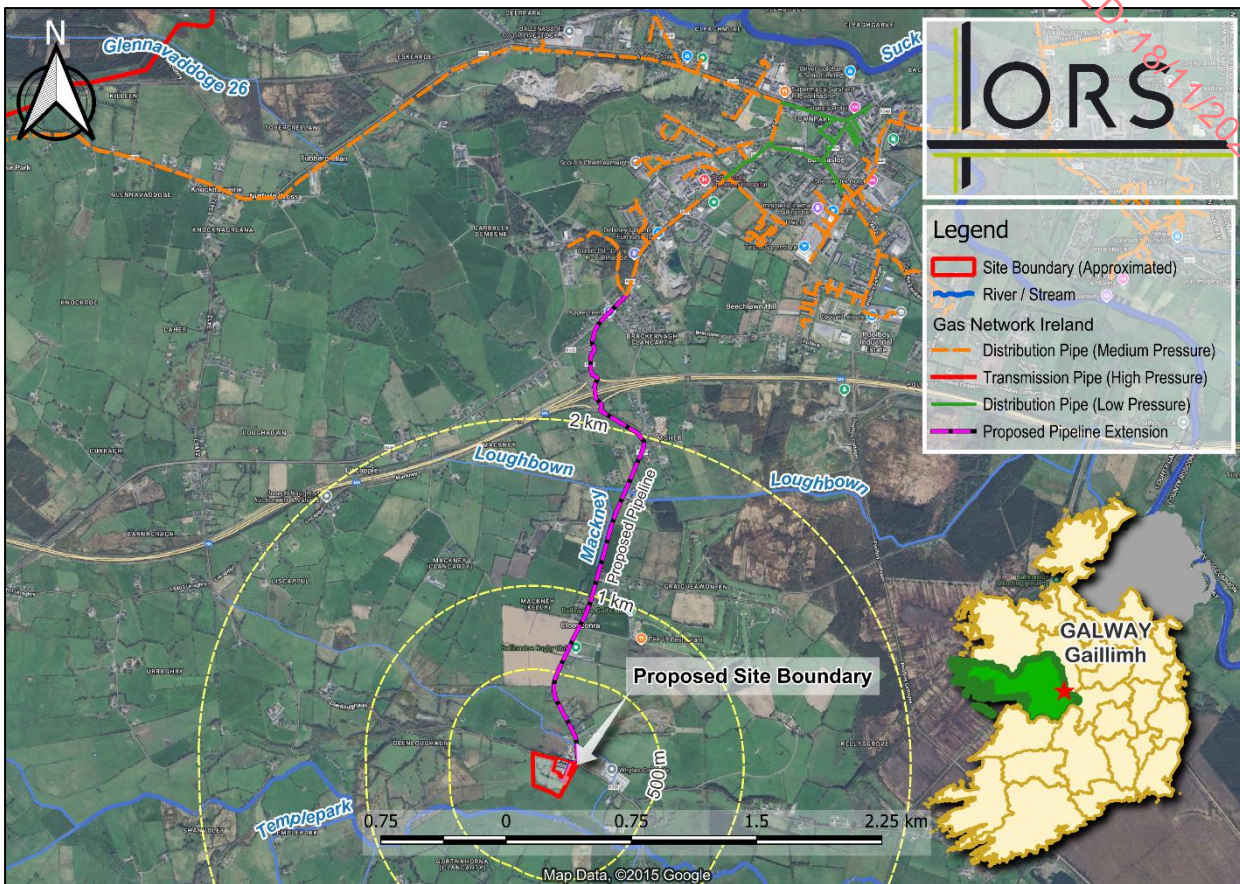


Figure 3: Existing gas network infrastructure from the Proposed Development. (Source: Gas Networks Ireland).

The GIU comprises equipment which will ensure that the biomethane is compliant with all necessary standards and regulations before it enters the local gas network. The unit performs the following key tasks:

- Gas pressure reduction and control: so that the gas pressure is always correct to match the medium pressure gas network.
- Gas analysis for compliance monitoring: the gas is tested for contaminants
- Metering: the volume of gas needs to be measured and recorded
- Flow Weighted Average Calorific Value: the energy content of the gas being injected into the grid needs to be measured and recorded. The calorific value must match the value stipulated by the local gas distributor.
- Odourisation for safety: prior to injection into the grid.
- Propanation: Where there are any shortfalls in the calorific value of biomethane, propane can be added from the on-site propane storage to match the calorific value required.

### 2.2.21 CO<sub>2</sub> Liquefaction

By extending the Biogas Upgrading Unit with a CO<sub>2</sub> Liquefaction system, the gaseous CO<sub>2</sub> that is produced during the biogas upgrading process can be captured and liquefied.

The CO<sub>2</sub> which passes through the membranes in the biogas upgrading unit is further treated using activated carbon filters. Residual compounds which may have passed through the

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membrane of the biogas upgrading unit are removed. The clean carbon dioxide is then cooled, compressed, and dried into liquid form. The liquid is then stored in the carbon dioxide storage tanks prior to being transported offsite.

By utilising this process, the biogenic CO<sub>2</sub> from biomethane production which would have been emitted to the atmosphere is now captured, purified, and reused, thereby creating a circular economy.

The CO<sub>2</sub> Liquefaction is shown as **item 26** on Site Layout Drawing Ref. **231960-ORS-Z0-00-DR-B-200**.

## 2.2.22 Biogas Flare

An enclosed biogas flare is proposed for installation on the site, serving as an additional safety measure. The flare will only operate under distinct scenarios to ensure safety and compliance.

The biogas flare serves as a safety device in case the biomethane upgrading unit requires unscheduled maintenance. This flare is activated only in the unlikely event of when there is no outlet (i.e. the biogas upgrading unit and CHPs) available for the produced biogas.

The flare is controlled and operated by the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system. An enclosed flare, characterised by the concealed flame and quiet operation below 65dB, ensure discreet and efficient operation during use.

The Biogas Flare is shown as **item 24** on Site Layout Drawing Ref. **231960-ORS-Z0-00-DR-B-200**.

## 2.2.23 Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition system

A supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system will be installed for ease of operation and monitoring of plant processes. This system comprises hardware and software components to monitor and control industrial processes within the site. SCADA will be used to monitor and control the anaerobic digestion process, biogas upgrade, grid injection and associated plant and emissions control devices.

## 2.2.24 Office

The Site includes a two-storey Office Building incorporating an office area, meeting room welfare facilities, storeroom, first aid facility, communications, and control room.

The Office is shown as **item 4** on Site Layout Drawing Ref. **231960-ORS-Z0-00-DR-B-200**.

## 2.2.25 Water Supply

The water requirements for the Proposed Development will be met as follows:

The Proposed Development has been designed to maximise the reuse of rainwater falling within the site.

- Rainwater runoff will be harvested from clean impermeable surfaces, service yards and building roofs for reuse on site.

- Reused rainwater will be utilised to provide:
  - Firefighting water capacity;
  - Washdown water for the facility, including silage clamps; and
  - Grey water supply for sanitary facilities.

Harvested rainwater for the Office and Welfare facilities will be treated via reverse osmosis and UV disinfection prior to use.

## 2.2.26 Surface Water Management

The proposed site will require the collection, attenuation and disposal of surface water accumulated during rainfall events.

In developing the surface water design for the site, a range of surface water collection and SuDS measures were reviewed. Measures which were deemed suitable in controlling the quality and quantity of water being discharged from the development include:

- Collection of excess roof rainwater and runoff from impermeable surfaces and attenuating this runoff prior to discharge to an outfall location
- The use of linear channels with sumps throughout the development.
- The implementation of a combined below ground (Pluvial Cube) and above ground attenuation (detention basin) solution.
- The use of petrol interceptors
- The use of rainwater harvesting tanks
- The use of swales for managing runoff
- Permeable paving for managing surface water runoff close to its source

Please refer to **Civil Engineering Planning Report Ref: 231960-ORS-XX-XX-RP-C-13a-001**.

## 2.2.27 Foul Water Management

As the site has no existing foul sewerage system, a proprietary system as recommended in the Site Suitability Assessment, will be installed to treat wastewater from the toilet and canteen. The system has been sized to cater for both this proposed development and the staff at the adjacent Torva meat processing site where normal loadings of 30l/day and BOD of 20g/day has been assumed. Testing and assessment have been carried out in accordance with the requirements of EPA Code of Practice Wastewater Treatment Manuals Treatment Systems for Single Houses (p.e. < 10).

Please refer to **Civil Engineering Planning Report Ref: 231960-ORS-XX-XX-RP-C-13a-001** for a Site Characterisation report, testing results, and specifications.

## 2.2.28 Bunding

The bund is designed in accordance with IPC Guidance on Storage and Transfer of Materials for Scheduled Activities (EPA, 2004). The digestion tank area will be bunded in its entirety to provide sufficient containment volume in the unlikely event of a leak at the facility.

The bund will be impermeable and provide the required storage volume i.e., a minimum of 110% of the largest single tank volume (110% of 8,150 m<sup>3</sup> = 8,965m<sup>3</sup>). The bund has been

designed to accommodate >8,965m<sup>3</sup> in the unlikely event of a failure of the storage tanks.

Maintenance vehicle access to the bund will be provided via 1no. ramp.

The Bunding is shown as **item 52** and **53** on Drawing Ref. **231960-ORS-Z1-ZZ-DR-B-200**.

## 2.2.29 Access Road

The site is located along Glenloughaun Road (L8412), with the site entrance approximately 40 m west of its junction with the R355 regional road. All site traffic will access the site from the R355, using only the short section of Glenloughaun Road between the junction and the site entrance. Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) traffic will not use Glenloughaun Road (L8412) beyond the site access.

The Proposed Development includes improvements to the L8412 local road in the vicinity of the site entrance, comprising localised widening of the carriageway by approximately 2 m, splays, provision of new steel palisade fencing and gated entrances, and associated road markings and advance warning signage on the R355 and L8412 in accordance with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) standards. These road improvement works are shown on Drawing Ref. **231960-ORS-ZZ-00-DR-TII-1200**.

## 2.2.30 Boundary Treatment

The site boundary will be enclosed by a mesh-panel perimeter fence approximately 1.8 m in height, with secure mesh-panel entrance and exit gates. Existing hedgerows along the northern and western boundaries will be retained and protected during construction, with root protection fencing installed prior to commencement of works.

The landscape strategy has been designed to provide effective short-, medium- and long-term visual buffering while placing sustainability, biodiversity and pollinator support at its core. It comprises a combination of reinforcement of existing native hedgerows, new native hedgerow planting, primary structure trees and woodland-style buffer planting, together with native shrub understorey and species-rich semi-natural grassland and swale planting. These measures are intended to integrate the Proposed Development into the surrounding landscape, enhance local ecological connectivity and deliver compliance with the National Pollinator Plan through the use of native, pollinator-friendly species and wildflower seed mixes.

Buffer planting is primarily focused along the northern, eastern and southern boundaries of the site and around more open aspects, where it will provide screening for nearby visual receptors while also increasing habitat value for wildlife. Species-rich grassland mixes characteristic of local dry calcareous grassland, together with damp-tolerant wildflower mixes in swales and around the pond, will further enhance the site's ecological value and support pollinating insects.

Please refer to the Landscape Plans (Refs: **24/CO/ORS/KG/M/002** and **25/CO/ORS/KG/M/003**), which accompany this application for detailed planting proposals, species lists and implementation/maintenance specifications.

## 2.2.31 Electricity Substation

The Proposed Development will include an ESB Networks substation. The substation will be designed and constructed in accordance with published ESB standard details and subject to ESB certification. A transformer is incorporated in the substation area to convert imported high

voltage electricity to low voltage for use on site.

Under normal operation the Proposed Development will be powered by the on-site CHP unit and Solar PV, with power supply from the grid provided only as a backup.

The Electricity Substation is shown as **item 05** on Site Layout Drawing Ref. **231960-ORS-Z0-00-DR-B-200**.

## 2.2.32 Solar PV

Solar photovoltaic (PV) modules are included upon the roof structures of the Feedstock Reception Building, Digestate Treatment Building and Site Office.

## 2.2.33 Site Security

Entrance to the site will include a locked gate, controlled entrance barrier and CCTV monitoring system.

## 2.2.34 Operating Hours

The facility will operate 24 hours per day, 7 days a week, as Anaerobic Digestion is a continuous biological process. However, feedstock will only be accepted between the hours of 0700 and 1900 Monday to Friday, and 0700 to 1600 on Saturday. There will be no deliveries on Sunday and on Bank Holidays.

## 2.3 Licensing Requirements

### 2.3.1 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Having regard to current law and practice, the Proposed Development will require an application for an Industrial Emissions (IE) licence to the EPA in accordance with Class 11.4 (b) of the First Schedule of the EPA Act 1992 as amended, outlined in **Table 2.5** below:

**Table 2.5: Class 11.4 of First Schedule to the EPA Act 1992 as amended**

*11.4 (a) Disposal of non-hazardous waste with a capacity exceeding 50 tonnes per day involving one or more of the following activities (other than activities to which the Urban Wastewater Treatment Regulations 2001 (S.I. 254 of 2001) apply):*

1. *biological treatment;*
2. *physico-chemical treatment;*
3. *pre-treatment of waste for incineration or co-incineration;*
4. *treatment of slags and ashes;*
5. *treatment in shredders of metal waste, including waste electrical and electronic equipment and end-of-life vehicles and their components.*

*(b) Recovery, or a mix of recovery and disposal, of non-hazardous waste with a capacity exceeding 75 tonnes per day involving one or more of the following activities, (other than activities to which the Urban Wastewater Treatment Regulations 2001 (S.I. No. 254 of 2001) apply):*

1. *biological treatment;*
2. *pre-treatment of waste for incineration or co-incineration;*
3. *treatment of slags and ashes;*
4. *treatment in shredders of metal waste, including waste electrical and electronic equipment and end-of-life vehicles and their components.*

*(c) Notwithstanding clause (b), when the only waste treatment activity carried out is anaerobic digestion, the capacity threshold for that activity shall be 100 tonnes per day.*

In the event of a grant of licence by the EPA to carry out activities that require such licence, it is expected that the following will be regulated under such licence:

- Emission Limit Values for emissions to air and stormwater;
- Monitoring requirements for emissions;
- Resource use and energy efficiency;
- Waste management control documentation;
- Waste acceptance procedures and records;
- Storage and transfer of substances;
- Changes to operations and the physical fabric of the facility;
- Facility management including the requirement for an environmental management system (EMS);
- Accident prevention and emergency response including fire water retention; and,
- Operational controls.

An Environmental Management System (EMS) will be put in place for the facility, as will be required by the IE Licence. The operator shall develop the EMS in accordance with ISO14001:2015, applying for accreditation when operational. This EMS will include but not be limited to the following:

- Measures to comply with the IE licence and other relevant environmental legislation;
- Waste Acceptance Procedures;
- Standard Operating Procedures;
- Measures to comply with the corporate sustainability goals (e.g., reducing water and energy consumption); and
- Accident prevention and emergency response procedures

### **2.3.2 Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine (DAFM)**

The Anaerobic Digestion facility will operate as a 'Type 1' plant under the European Union (Animal By-Products) Regulations 2014 (S.I. No. 187 of 2014).

The facility will process Category 2 animal by-products, specifically farmyard manures, i.e. cattle slurry, pig slurry and poultry manure. Approval will be required from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), in accordance with Article 24(a) of Regulation (EC) No. 1069/2009, for the acceptance and/or treatment of animal by-products at the facility.

The Proposed Development has been designed in accordance with DAFM guidance *CN11: Conditions for approval and operation of biogas plants transforming animal by-products and derived products in Ireland*. The application process for DAFM approval and operation of the proposed facility occurs in three stages, as follows:

- Application for approval in principle.
- Application for conditional approval to operate, which allows an initial operating period of three months to test and demonstrate compliance with ABP requirements. This stage commences following construction and handover of the facility.
- Full approval.

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This approval process will commence following the granting of planning permission for the Proposed Development.

### **2.3.3 SEVESO III Directive / Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations**

The Chemicals Act (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2015 (S.I. No. 209 of 2015) transpose Directive 2012/18/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 July 2012 on the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances, which amended and subsequently repealed Council Directive 96/82/EC (“the Seveso III Directive”).

The purpose of the COMAH Regulations is to establish rules for the prevention of major accidents involving dangerous substances and to limit, as far as possible, the consequences of such accidents for human health and the environment, with the overall objective of providing a high level of protection in a consistent and effective manner.

Under the COMAH Regulations, operators of establishments that store, handle or process dangerous substances above defined threshold quantities are required to take all necessary measures to prevent major accidents and to limit their consequences for human health and the environment. An establishment may be classified as an upper-tier or lower-tier site depending on the inventory of dangerous substances present; sites that store, handle or process dangerous substances only below the relevant lower-tier thresholds do not qualify as establishments for the purposes of the Regulations.

#### **SEVESO/COMAH Assessment of the Proposed Development**

Methane, the primary combustible component of biogas, is classified as a P2 flammable gas under Regulation (EC) No. 1272/2008 on the classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures. Of the flammable substances considered for the Proposed Development—biomethane, propane and diesel—all are classified as “named dangerous substances” under Part 2 of the Seveso III Directive / COMAH Regulations, with the exception of biogas (i.e. untreated biomethane), which is not a named substance but is captured under the generic P2 flammable gas category.

According to Note 19 in Annex I of the Seveso III Directive, upgraded biogas (biomethane) is treated in the same way as natural gas. It therefore has qualifying quantities of 50 tonnes for lower-tier and 200 tonnes for upper-tier classification. Propane (LPG) shares the same qualifying quantities, whereas diesel has significantly higher qualifying quantities of 2,500 tonnes for lower-tier and 25,000 tonnes for upper-tier classification.

Biogas falls under Part 1 of Annex I to the Directive, within the “categories of dangerous substances” as a P2 flammable gas. Under the COMAH Regulations, P2 flammable gases have a threshold quantity of 10 tonnes for lower-tier classification. For the Proposed Development, the maximum quantity of biogas has been calculated as 7.98 tonnes, taking into account gas membranes, digester tank freeboards and associated pipework.

Applying the aggregate calculation method set out in Annex I of the Seveso III / COMAH regime, the proposed facility, when operating at full capacity, remains below the lower-tier

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threshold at which the COMAH Regulations would apply. The aggregated fraction for all relevant dangerous substances is calculated to be 0.81, i.e. less than 1, and therefore the site does not constitute a Seveso / COMAH establishment.

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