

Cutting edge recycling plant wins approval

By Debbie Hall

A CUTTING edge recycling facility has been given the green light for the county.

Proposals to develop an existing waste management plant to include the installation of an anaerobic digestion plant - where microorganisms break down biodegradable material for a number of uses - have been approved by West Lothian Council planning councillors.

The facility, at the Scotwaste site on Whitburn Road, Bathgate, is the first of its type in the UK and will provide energy taken from recycled waste.

Anaerobic digestion is widely used as a renewable energy source because it helps to replace fossil fuels.

Recyclable materials brought to the site will be separated from the organic materials which are processed into slurry and pumped in to digestion/fermentation tanks for anaerobic digestion.

This process produces bio-gas

which is fed into a combined heat and power plant (CHP) to produce heat and electricity.

Once it has been treated, the organic material is then dried out to produce a stabilised odourless material, which can be used as organic compost or a feedstock for an energy plant.

The site will have the capacity to process up to 200,000 tonnes of waste per annum, with 105,000 tonnes of this being treated in the anaerobic digestion plant and the remainder being recycled.

Most of the waste would be commercial, however the facility could also take municipal waste if this is desired.

Stewart Melrose director of Scotwaste, said he was delighted the application, lodged jointly with the Banks Group, had been approved by the local authority.

And he said if anyone still had concerns about the plant, he would happily meet with them to put their minds at ease.

"Anybody who knows anything

about the application have been supportive, unfortunately if people don't knock on our door and ask questions then they are going to jump to the wrong conclusions.

"We are delighted and appreciated the foresight of the planners and council who recognised that this has got to be the way to go."

The application attracted over 130 complaints from neighbouring businesses and residents, who were concerned about the smell coming from the plant and an increased number of lorries using surrounding roads.

A leaflet had been put up at premises around the town, saying the plant would create smoke and bad smells.

However Ronnie McLeod, chairman of Bathgate Community Council, said the leaflet was just "scaremongering" and he supported the venture.

He said: "We are quite happy with it, we had some people from Standhill which borders on to it who were worried about it but they were relatively happy once it was explained what it was going to do."

Police warning over thefts from cars

POLICE are urging motorists to be on their guard after a spate of car crime across the county.

And officers believe the fact thieves can see satellite navigation systems in cars could tempt a thief.

Police say that all valuables and