



DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

HYBRID PLANNING APPLICATION; FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE PROPOSED ERECTION OF A NEW POULTRY SITE WITH SOLAR PANELS, BIOMASS BOILERS, ASSOCIATED BUILDINGS & DEVELOPMENT AND CONNECTION TO THE A480 AND; OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR A POULTRY MANAGERS' DWELLING WITH DETAILED DESIGN, MATERIALS AND DRAINAGE RESERVED

ON LAND AT

GREEN FARM, CRUMP OAK WOOD, LYONSHALL, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR5 3JY

ON BEHALF OF

F.C Jones & Co



RTPI
mediation of space · making of place



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1 INTRODUCTION

This application is submitted by Berrys, chartered surveys and town planners, on behalf of F.C Jones & Co and proposes the erection of six poultry units and associated development to house up to 360,000 broiler birds per cycle.

The application site has been identified as a suitable location for development based on the lack of nearby environmental designations and fact that residential occupiers are over 400m from the proposed poultry units. The site also has direct access onto the A480, which provides good communication links to Hereford and other destinations without the need to travel along narrow rural roads.

In addition to the six poultry units the application also includes the erection of 18 feed bins, a biomass boiler building which will house 12 x 199.25kWth biomass boilers, 250kW of solar panels on the roof of the poultry units, a poultry managers dwelling, service and welfare building and connecting to the A480. Further details about the application proposals are set out within this statement and the accompanying Environmental Statement, which also assess the potential environmental impacts from the proposed.

2 BACKGROUND

The continued growth of the UK poultry sector has made an important contribution to the UK poultry meat production capacity and the proposed site at Green Farm is part of this process. This is part of the development of the industry to bringing us closer to being self-sufficient in poultry meat in the UK and reducing the need to import meat, reducing greenhouse gasses from fossil fuel in transportation and other associated pollution.

Development of new units enables the growers to install new equipment and modern buildings which provide much higher standards of environmental management, animal welfare, energy efficiency and bio-security than can typically be achieved through the modernisation of existing buildings.

The application site has been identified as a suitable location for development based on the lack of

nearby environmental designations and fact that residential occupiers are over 400m from the proposed poultry units. The site also direct access onto the A480, which provides good communication links to Hereford and other destinations without the need to travel along narrow rural roads.

For the applicant, the proposed development provides an opportunity to expand its existing poultry activities which will help the business to grow. The growth of a local farming business will add value to the Herefordshire and wider economy through direct and in-direct job creation. The development of the site will require a multi-million pound investment, much of which will be spent in the local economy.

3 SITE LOCATION

The site is located approximately 1.4 miles south of Lyonshall with direct access off the A480. It is located on the western side of the A480 and to the west of Crump Oak Wood. A location and block plan is attached at Appendix 1.

The application site has been identified as a suitable location for development based on the lack of nearby environmental designations and fact that residential occupiers are over 400m from the proposed poultry units. The site also direct access onto the A480, which provides good communication links to Hereford and other destinations without the need to travel along narrow rural roads.

The main part of the site forms part of an arable field currently utilised for crop production. The site is defined by established hedgerows with some mature trees on its northern, southern and western boundaries, with a recently planted hedgerow on the eastern boundary. Crump Oak Wood is located approximately 300m east of where the poultry units are proposed to be located. The field that the poultry units are to be sited gently slopes from south to north.

As well as having good access links the site benefits from being well away from residential occupiers with the nearest being approximately 450m west of the site as measured from the nearest point of the poultry units to the dwelling.

The topography of the site, surrounding hedgerows and trees and intervening landscape means that the buildings can be assimilated into the landscape with some mitigation measures (additional tree

planting and allowing existing hedgerows to grow-up) so that there is no significant impact on the landscape character and no significant impact on visual effects.

4 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Use

The proposed poultry enterprise will operate as a broiler site accommodating a maximum 360,000 birds (60,000 per shed) per cycle. The cycle begins with day old chicks being delivered to the site and the birds being grown for 38 days. Thinning will take place at roughly day 33 with approximately 30% of the birds being removed before the remainder are removed roughly between days 34 and 43. The cleaning of the units and turn around period before the new crop is delivery usual takes 7-10 days, meaning that each cycle is approximately 45-50 days. This therefore leads to 7.7 crops per year.

The proposed poultry units will be located on agricultural land shown as Grade 2/3 on the Land Classification Map. Although arable land would be lost as a result of the proposed development the site will remain in agricultural use and still be used for the production of food. In these circumstances the loss of this arable land is considered acceptable.

4.2 Amount and Scale

A summary of the proposed development is set-out below and is should on the submitted Site Layout Plan.

- Six poultry units measuring 91.84m x 27.7 and 5.3m to the ridge.
- Eighteen feed bins in total (two groups of 12 feed bins at the front of Units 4 and 5 and a group of 6 feed bins in front of Unit 1. The feed bins will 7.2m in height.
- Control Room 3m in width running along the front (eastern side) of the units.
- Enclosed Biomass Boiler buildings 15m in width and 7m to the ridge in front of Units 2 and 3, and Units 5 and 6.
- Canopies extending 15m over the concrete yard on the front 9eastern side of the units).
- Biosecurity service and welfare building (10m x 15m and 7m to the ridge) and parking

located on the northern side of Unit 1.

- Poultry managers' dwelling located on the eastern side of the yard.
- Provision of HGV track to access the concrete yard.
- Provision of maintenance track to the rear of the poultry units.
- Ancillary structures and items – dirty water tanks, gas tanks, electrical generation cabins, weight bridge and shed.
- Detention pond located at the southern end of the site for the management of surface water.
- The FFL of the poultry units will be 171.00 AOD.

The poultry units will be of standard construction and consist of steel-framed, fully- insulated buildings clad externally with profiled sheeting. The poultry units, service building and feed bins will be coloured Juniper Green.

Each poultry unit will have 15 high velocity ridge fans and 10 gable fans (western end) to disperse odours and keep internal temperatures to animal welfare standards. The ridge fans will be coloured matt black. The gable fans will only be used in periods of particularly hot weather or in emergency situations as back-up if there is a fault with any of the ridge fans. A noise baffle screen will be provided at the rear of each of the poultry units.

Whilst the buildings are large it is considered that in the context of their location and surroundings that the amount and scale of development is appropriate.

4.3 Layout

The poultry units will run in an east – west direction, with the concrete yard on the eastern side of the units. The concrete yard will be mostly covered by a canopy to keep the site clean and tidy.

It is also proposed to have a poultry managers' dwelling on the eastern side of the yard, close to where the access track enters the yard.

The poultry units and associated buildings will be sited on a level platform with a FFL of 171.00 AOD. Ground levels range from 167 AOD at the northern end to 173 AOD at the southern end. To achieve a

level platform will therefore require a modest cut and fill operation across the site. The soil removed to create the level platform will be accommodated on the application site.

The proposed poultry site will be accessed from the A480 which lies approximately 330m to the east of where the poultry units will be located. There is an existing crushed stone track running from the A480 to the entrance to the arable field where the poultry units are to be located. There will need to be an upgrading of the track where it joins the A480 to ensure that there is a 20m length of concrete/tarmac and appropriate width for two HGV's. Appropriate visibility splays can be provided.

A new track will need to be provided to serve the poultry units. This section of track is shown on the site layout plan. The track will run alongside the recently planted hedgerow on the eastern side of the site before turning into the concrete yard which runs along the eastern side of the poultry units. A large proportion of the concrete yard will be covered by canopies. HGV's will enter and exist via the same route. The area of track and concrete yard have been kept to the minimum required for the safe operation of the site.

Car and small vehicles will use a separate track and a small amount of parking will be available adjacent to the service and welfare building at the northern end of the site. Where all visitors must report to.

A maintenance track will also be provided to allow small vehicles to access the rear of the units.

The topography of the site, surrounding hedgerows and trees and intervening landscape means that the buildings can be assimilated into the landscape with some mitigation measures (additional tree planting and allowing existing hedgerows to grow-up) so that there is no significant impact on the landscape character and no significant impact on visual effects.

4.4 Appearance

The poultry units will be of standard construction and consist of steel-framed, fully- insulated buildings clad externally with profiled sheeting. As previously mentioned the poultry units, service building and feed bins will be coloured as Juniper Green.

The ridge fans will have matt black chimneys and also the biomass boiler chimneys will be matt black.

Lighting on the site will be kept to a minimum to ensure the safe operation of the site but to reduce any light spill outside the unit. Each shed will have a low-wattage, low intensity light above the openings to

allow safe working during normal working hours during the winter. Additional lighting may be required during the removal of birds but this will be carried out in low light levels to avoid causing unnecessary stress to the birds. There will be no use of high intensity lighting. All activities will take place in the yard on the eastern side of the poultry units which will help to reduce light pollution.

4.5 Landscape

The assessment of landscape and visual effects of the proposed development demonstrates that the site is visually enclosed by landform and vegetation, with limited effect on visual amenity with the exception of the open views from a short section of the A480, north of Crump Oak Wood, and from a short section of footpath PM57. Pennsylvania Farm is located approximately 320m west of the site boundary. The farmhouse is located to the west of the farm buildings complex. The vegetation along the western boundary of the garden and western boundary of the farm complex is likely to block most views to the proposed development. Any views would be winter glimpses of the western elevation of the poultry houses. Seen through the intervening vegetation and seen in the context of the farm buildings complex. The sensitivity of the receptor is high and the magnitude of change would be negligible, therefore the significance of effect is considered to be minor adverse which is not significant.

Proposed mitigation measures includes:

- Approximately 400m² proposed native mixed tree and shrub planting in the southern part of the site by the detention pond and to provide screening.
- Existing hedgerows to be allowed to grow-up so as to provide additional screening.

5 ACCESS AND HIGHWAYS

A Transport Statement has been prepared by Jubb Consulting Engineers Ltd.

The proposal to establish a poultry enterprise on the site will help reduce the demand for production further afield that are processed at the processing plant in Hereford.

Based on the present level of traffic, there will be an increase in vehicular movements associated with

the rearing of broilers. Actual traffic flows onto the site will peak and trough in conjunction with the production cycle, with an estimated daily peak of 21 heavy goods vehicles (two way) at the time of bird collection. The additional HGV movements will have little impact on the wider strategic network and can be comfortably accommodated within the strategic highway.

Suitable parking will be introduced onsite and the proposed access junction is of a suitable width and visibility to allow the safe egress and ingress to the A480.

Consequently, there are felt to be no grounds for refusal based on highway safety for this expansion of this agricultural enterprise which is seeking to ensure its continued economic viability and contribute to the increased demand for home grown meat.

6 POULTRY MANAGERS' DWELLING

As part of the development proposals it is necessary for a full time poultry manager to live on the site and as such a dwelling is require. Another full-time worker will also be needed but they would not be based at the site. Additional labour will be brought in during the placement and catching of the birds at the start and end of each crop cycle. In addition specialist cleaning staff are used at the end of the crop cycle to clean and disinfect the poultry buildings before they are got ready for the next crop. All of these processes are overseen by the poultry manager.

The proposed dwelling is in keeping with agricultural farming activities and is required to ensure the efficient, safe and appropriate running of the existing poultry enterprise.

It is a functional requirement of the poultry enterprise for someone to be living onsite to run the unit successfully but also act on emergencies which require immediate attention. The difference between 5- 15 minutes than 30-40 minutes is huge in emergency cases for bird health and welfare, such as the ventilation fans breaking down.

As the requirements on the poultry manager for such an enterprise become ever greater to ensure all standards are meet the need becomes greater. With ever more increasing automated systems such as operating an automated system whereby when an alarm provides a warning, these warnings need to be

responded to within 10 minutes. Welfare is paramount in meeting a wide range of legislation.

The poultry manager's role is to provide the day to day labour and oversee the running of the poultry site, to ensure it meets the required management. This includes bird welfare, shed environmental controls, feed deliveries, and chick and bird movements on and off the site and to ensure the heating and ventilation systems are working at all times.

To meet all of the required standards it is essential that there is 24 hour 7 day a week supervision. All the sheds, ventilation systems and biomass boiler heating systems are automated systems that can produce faults at any time. Immediate reaction to deal with these faults is essential. In such situations as there being no heat in the shed due to a heater break down this could create a situation where bird welfare is quickly compromised and therefore can lead to a high level of losses. Poor bird welfare can ultimately lead to suffering but also reduced margins for the producer and a higher proportion of rejected birds during the processing stage.

The Proposed Dwelling

The proposed agricultural workers dwelling would need to be a property of an appropriate design for its location which will be in keeping with the rural character of the surrounding area.

This will meet the desires of a modern site manager, taking into account possible family requirements. It is now a prerequisite in attracting recruits for broiler site managers to have a house on site. The level of input and management means it is a requirement that managers are living on site to have a balance of family life with the job. The location has been chosen to ensure the dwelling is as close as possible to the poultry sheds (within sight and sound) yet allowing for a sufficient distance for the manager to feel separate from the sheds for their own privacy.

No detailed house designs have been produced yet but it is proposed that these can be dealt with by way of a condition.

It is proposed to locate the dwelling to the east of the poultry units close to where the access track enters the arable field where the units will be located.

Clear evidence of Intention and evidence the business has been planned on a sound financial basis

FC Jones & Co is an established farming business which is financially viable and sustainable.

Labour Requirement

The standard labour associated with operating and managing a broiler rearing enterprise include the following;

- Placement of birds at the beginning of the cycle
- Checking of the birds on a daily basis at least three times a day, seven days a week
- Checking of feed and water systems
- Checking of temperature and ventilation systems
- Replacing bedding throughout the crop cycle
- Feed deliveries
- Morality collection
- Catching of the birds during thinning and at the end of the crop cycle
- Full clean down of the buildings, including dismantling equipment and removing the manure and re-erecting the internal equipment
- Maintenance
- Record keeping

In addition the poultry site is to be heated by a biomass boiler system, which is located within a separate building on the site, the management of this system is the responsibility of the poultry manager.

The number of birds per crop cycle is currently up to 360,000 chickens, housed within six poultry buildings. The birds are thinned at approximately 33 days before the rest of the crop is cleared out at 38-43 days, the buildings cleaned down and the manure removed.

The labour requirement for the proposed development is as briefly set out above and detailed further in Functional Need section below. The standard labour requirements has been calculated using the Standard Man Days Calculation from the John Nix Farm Management Pocketbook. A breakdown of this calculation

can be seen below;

The Farm Management Pocketbook states that the labour unit of one person is assumed to work 2,200 hours per year, with the total hours then converted into 275 notional 'Standard Man Days' (SMD) of 8 hours. An additional 15-20% has been traditionally added to the calculation to take into account for general maintenance, repairs and management. The total SMD requirements is then divided by 275 to find the number of full time employees that will be required.

The standard labour assessment is set out in the below table;

Stocking	No. of birds reared per year	Standard Man Days per Bird	Total
Broiler chickens 360,000 x 7 crops per annum	2,520,000	0.002	5,040
General Maintenance at 15%			756
Total :			5,796

The overall standard labour requirement of the poultry enterprise, which contribute to the essential need, amounts to 5,796 standard man days, which equates to in 21 full time workers.

It is acknowledged that the efficiency of the system undertaken by the poultry manager at the poultry site and the use of specialist labour for the placement, depopulation and clean down means that despite industry norms suggesting a requirement for over 21 full time workers the enterprise is able to be adequately managed using 1 full time manager and 1 full time assistant.

The standard man day calculations make it abundantly clear on the importance of a manager residing adjacent to the poultry buildings as there is an essential need.

THE FUNCTIONAL NEED

"A functional need exists where vital processes require essential care at short notice".

The primary contribution to the functional need for on-farm residential accommodation relates to the management and daily running of the poultry site. The birds require a high level of care and attention to detail, not only in the day-to-day maintenance, feeding and care but simply in observation and ensuring

each animal is healthy. These functional needs are outlined below;

The proposed poultry buildings will house up to 360,000 birds in total per crop cycle, split between six sheds.

The production cycle begins with the preparation of the buildings, including covering the floor with bedding and providing sufficient feed. The feed will be supplied by the processing company. The water will be supplied by nipple drinkers which offer water on demand but minimise spillage.

The birds will be brought in as day old chicks. The birds are reared and then thinned at 33 days, with the rest of the birds cleared out at 38 - 43 days, leading to around 7.7 crops per year after cleanout. The clean-out and set up phase will last for 8 – 10 days once all of the birds have been removed at the end of the crop cycle.

A full-time worker is required to be on site for 24 hours a day to manage the poultry enterprise, including to check that electronic systems are running correctly, as well as being able to respond to emergencies.

The birds are checked regularly and any mortalities removed on a daily basis. The dead birds are stored in vermin proof buildings away from the poultry site to await collection by Animal Health Approved contractors.

Placement of the birds at the beginning of the crop cycle involves one day old chicks being delivered onto the site. This placement will take place over a one to two day period. The poultry manager will be required to manage and assist during this process, including checking the building is heated to the right temperature before the birds arrive, unloading and placement of the birds and checking that the birds have settled in and are healthy on arrival. Although the placement of the birds should be scheduled at specific times the poultry manager will be required to be onsite well in advance beforehand to make sure the buildings are ready and in case the drivers arrive early. Once the birds arrive on the lorries they are immediately unloaded and placed in the buildings to cause as minimal stress as possible.

Constant monitoring of the birds is timely and a vitally important procedure at the beginning of the crop

cycle, especially during the first 10 days of the crop cycle.

It is important that the birds are checked at least three times a day, 7 days a week during the crop cycle and during the first 10 days at least five times a day to ensure that the birds have settled into the new environment and are used to human contact.

Birds are fed regularly by an automated feeding system. Failure of the feeding systems would have a dramatic effect on bird stress leading to a reduction in the daily weight gain of the birds and in addition lead to potential mortalities. Not only would this have a significant bird welfare implication it would also have an adverse effect on financial implications.

The birds require a constant supply of water, which is provided by nipple drinkers. It is essential that the water is provided by an uninterrupted supply constantly throughout the whole of the crop cycle. Any shortage in water would lead to the birds very quickly become dehydrated, it is therefore important that all drinkers throughout the whole of each shed are monitored on a regular basis to make sure all birds have access to water. If a section of the water supply drinkers gets blocked in one part of the shed, it will lead to overcrowding and suffocation of birds trying to drink at the available part of the shed, alternatively the birds nearest to the blocked water supply may not move to find water which would lead to dehydration. In the event that there is a water shortage problem, it is essential for someone to be on hand to promptly remedy any supply problems.

It is important that as the chickens grow the height of the water drinkers and feeders is raised to make sure the birds have the required access to feed and water at all times. The poultry manager will be required to monitor the rearing of the birds and make sure these requirements are undertaken at the appropriate times.

The ventilation is provided by an automated system, which might need to be adjusted hourly throughout the day depending on the internal and external temperature conditions. Birds have a poor ability to respond to temperature changes, with any failure to the ventilation system leading to rapid increase or decrease to the temperature within the poultry buildings. This would cause heat stress to the birds and, if not promptly rectified, would lead to bird suffocation resulting in death. Although the ventilation system is alarmed to warn of problems and failure, it is essential that corrective response is swift to rectify the problems and

prevent loss of life within the flock.

The poultry buildings are heated via a biomass boiler system, located within a separate building adjacent to the poultry units. This system is fed constantly with woodchip feedstock which is stored within a section of the biomass building. It is important that the heating system is checked daily by the poultry manager to ensure that it is working correctly. In addition the feedstock supply must be monitored. When required the poultry manager is responsible for ordering more wood and overseeing the delivering onto the site along with overseeing the wood being chipped and blown into the storage building. It is vitally important for bird welfare that the heating system is working at all times. If the biomass boiler system stops working then it is important that the poultry manager changes the heating system to the backup gas system immediately.

Lighting is an important factor, the number of hours of light per day is of importance and needs to be strictly controlled for two reasons; firstly to provide a standard number of light hours under a regular regime to maintain a healthy environment for the birds to have sufficient feed and water and secondly to dissuade the birds from pecking each other. Any disruption to the daily growth and weight gain of the birds can be a consequential breach of the contractual obligations, which would have a financial implication.

Overcrowding can happen if the birds are stressed or startled with undue panic causing large scale losses due to smothering and trigger outbreaks of feather pecking due to stress. Incidents of panic are not audible outside of the buildings, constant monitoring is required to check the welfare of the birds and make sure that birds are separated and happy.

In case of emergencies such as fire, it is important that someone is on hand to prevent the spread of fire and if possible rescue of birds to alleviate suffering and death. Despite the installation of fire alarms and smoke detectors, someone needs to be closely on hand in sight of the unit in the event of emergency. Being on site will allow the poultry manager to quickly react to such emergencies. The difference to being on site and being over 10-15 minutes away can be crucial both from a bird welfare point of view and also from the financial losses which can occur. It is well known within industry that someone residing on site will be able to smell the fire and / or hear the birds if they are stressed or panicking and react before the alarms have had chance to inform the emergency.

During the crop cycle fresh bedding will be required to the poultry sheds as and when necessary, again it will be the poultry manager's responsibility to decide when fresh bedding is made available and to undertake the job of applying the bedding to the sheds in an appropriate manner for the welfare of the birds.

Feed and fuel deliveries will take place during the crop cycle, which the poultry manager will be responsible for supervising and assisting in the deliveries onto the site.

Records must be kept along with site management and operating records to include bird illness / mortalities, temperature conditions, feed and water consumption etc. these will be undertaken by the poultry manager throughout the day.

At the end of the crop cycle the buildings are de-populated this involves the removal of all birds. This takes place with articulated HGVs used for the transporting of the birds off site. The manager will be responsible for organising the removal of the birds from the site, which will include assisting in the catching and loading of the birds. The poultry manager will be required on the lead up to the catching phase to make sure the equipment such as feeders and drinkers are removed out of the way at the last minute to aid the collection of the birds. This has to be done at the last minute due to bird welfare, which means that the poultry manager will be required to be onsite at least an hour before the destocking commences and during the night-time period to undertake the requirements of destocking, including any last minute changes to when the HGVs are due to arrive.

Once the birds have been removed the equipment within the buildings must be dismantled and a full clean down must take place, including the full crops supply of manure which will be loaded into trailers, sheeted and taken off site. The buildings then go through a thorough clean-out phase which involves dry-cleaning to remove organic material, wash down and disinfecting.

All year round on-site supervision is required for a security aspect, which deters intruders and provides protection to livestock and property against theft or injury and contributes to animal welfare against unwanted intrusions.

It is vital for the welfare of the stock that supplies of medicines and related products are kept within the store of the poultry buildings, along with other cleaning products, so that they are on hand when needed. Such products are potentially hazardous to human health and need to be kept in locked storage. It is vital that security of the site is paramount for the protection of the birds, the infrastructure and equipment along with the safe store of hazardous products which must be kept away from public. Without the manager living on site, the poultry site would be open to trespassers and unwelcome intruders, without the manager's knowledge until it was too late. Rural crime is recognised to be an increasingly serious issue.

The above functions cannot be performed efficiently and within animal welfare standards unless a member of staff is located on site to the facility, able to immediately detect a problem and to take prompt action to rectify it.

ANIMAL WELFARE REGULATIONS

There are various National and European regulations which the keeping of livestock, including poultry sites, have to comply with.

Compliance with Codes of Good Agricultural Practice (produced by Defra)

The welfare of farm animals is often considered under the framework of the "five freedoms", which also forms the basis for the codes of good agricultural practice. These five freedoms include:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst - by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour;
2. Freedom from discomfort - by providing an appropriate environment;
3. Freedom from pain, injury or disease - by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment;
4. Freedom to express normal behaviour - by providing sufficient space and proper facilities;
5. Freedom from fear and distress - by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

Living within sight and sound of housed livestock is important to being able to ensure all of the freedoms are met.

Red Tractor Assurance Poultry Scheme

The Government also produces a series of 'Welfare Codes', which farmers and employers are required to ensure are undertaken by law. With a greater emphasis on animal welfare the Red Tractor Assurance Poultry Scheme sets out the minimum welfare standards for all birds.

The Red Tractor Welfare Code covers all aspects of intensive poultry farming including;

- Animal Health and Welfare
- Feed and Water
- Housing and Handling Facilities
- Casualty and Fallen Stock
- Poultry Transport
- Staff and Contractors
- Documents and Procedures
- Animal Medicines and Bio-security

Health and Welfare Monitoring

Inspection by a trained eye is vital to detect the early onset of disease and general ill health. Relevant signs include:

- Lethargic / weak birds, often found lying down or in a crouched position
- Panting or gasping for air with unusual breathing sounds
- Eyes closed and head down or tucked in close to the body
- Head shaking
- Discharge evident from eyes and / or nostrils
- Reduced water or feed intake
- Birds acting unaware, i.e. not being alert or responsive
- Feathers appearing ruffled, dirty or unkempt
- Lameness
- Loss of body condition

These problems generally can only be detected through continual observation of the birds, which can only be achieved with the poultry manager living on site.

FINANCIAL NEED

The business demonstrates clear evidence that its trading enterprises and activities are financially sound and profitable,

Having made continuous physical and financial investments over nearly 60 years into poultry farming, F C Jones & Co farmed poultry business demonstrates clearly that it's farming activities and investments are financially sound.

If planning permission is granted for the proposed development it would only be constructed if a contract has been secured from a poultry supplier.

When a farm contract is secured, this business will be secured on the basis that the high quality on site management, is accounted for in the costs of running the farm. This leaves a sensible margin to pay off the investment.

It can be concluded that the development of the poultry business to house the required worker on site has been planned on a sound financial basis.

CONCLUSION

The proposed poultry development requires the essential need for a farm workers dwelling, which has been informed and as a result adheres to relevant National and Local Planning Policy and Guidance. The proposed development aligns itself with Herefordshire Councils planning policies being sustainable development of a rural agricultural business. Therefore in accordance with the relevant planning policy there is a clear need for an agricultural dwelling to be attached to the poultry enterprise.

7 POLICY ASSESSMENT

7.1 National Planning Policy

Overview

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012. The Framework replaces most former planning policy statements and guidance notes and is a key part of Government reforms to make the planning system less complex and more accessible, emphasizing sustainable development and planning for prosperity.

At the heart of NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. Sustainable development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved, without delay.

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that there are three different dimensions to “sustainable” development: economic, social and environmental. In the context of this application these three dimensions are considered below:

Economic Role

Paragraph 17 of the NPPF sets out a number of core planning principles which should underpin both plan-making and decision taking. Amongst these core principles is an objective to “proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local place that the country needs.” Importantly it is stressed that “every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the business needs of an area”.

Chapter 3 of the NPPF is dedicated to “supporting a prosperous rural economy”, stating that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. In promoting a strong rural economy, local plans should promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land based rural businesses. Paragraph 19 of the NPPF states that “significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system”.

The applicant is a well-established farming and poultry business, which is looking to expand activities. In addition to helping to meet the demand for British chicken meat; the proposed development will help to preserve the viability of the business for future generations. In our professional view the proposed development complies with the national planning policy outlined here and weight should be given to the need to support such rural businesses, particularly in ensuring their longevity through sustainable reactions to farming markets.

Social Role

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that “development should support strong, vibrant and healthy communities...with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being”.

Agriculture plays a significant role in the vibrancy of local communities across Herefordshire, performing a social function as well as an economic function. The farming community is a key part of community

life and cohesion in our rural villages and towns. In addition, agriculture provides a key source of employment for local people, particularly in peak seasons such as the autumn harvest.

The proposed purpose built buildings will help to ensure that the business remains viable for future generations. A successful and growing business will also add value to the local economy and supply chain by creating further employment and wealth. As such, the proposed development should be supported.

Environmental Role

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that; “development should contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy”.

In this instance the proposed development site for the poultry units is located outside any environmentally designated areas to included Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. However, it is recognised that Crump Oak Wood, a designated Ancient Replanted Woodland, is located approximately 300m to the east of the proposed poultry units. As such, full consideration has been given to the potential impact of the development on the character of the surrounding landscape.

The landscape is capable of accommodating the development and additional mitigation works will further reduce any impact. Overall, the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment concluded that following mitigation measures, vegetation growth and weathering, no significant residual visual impacts would remain. The site was assessed to have a medium landscape sensitivity and would be subject to a medium magnitude of landscape impact. The significance of landscape effects was assessed to be moderate i.e. not significant.

The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable with regard to the potential effects on landscape character and visual impact.

The proposed poultry units will be located on agricultural land shown as Grade 2/3 on the Land Classification Map. Whilst it is recognised that planning policy seeks to protect the best agricultural land, para 112 of NPPF states;

Local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.

The site will remain in agricultural use and in food production and in these circumstances the loss of this arable land is considered acceptable.

In light of the information provided above, it is our professional view that the proposed development complies fully with the policies contained within the NPPF. The proposed development makes a sustainable contribution to Herefordshire's rural economy and farming community, expanding an existing and well established agricultural business.

Poultry Managers' Dwelling

The NPPF allows for dwellings in isolated rural location if it can be demonstrated that there is a functional requirement for the dwelling and that it is necessary for a viable agricultural enterprise. Under paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) it is important to show the requirement for "essential need" to be proven.

The NPPF seeks to "support a prosperous rural economy, high quality communications infrastructure, and to promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land based businesses" (S3 Para 28, 42 NPPF).

Therefore agricultural dwellings are allowed for the enhancement and re-organisation of the holding or to aid the growth or establishment of a new enterprise, where close supervision of livestock is required. In accordance with the NPPF the proposed workers dwelling represents a sustainable addition to the poultry business, and to the surrounding local area.

The proposed residential dwelling will allow the poultry manager to reside on site as required on any poultry enterprise of this nature for the safe and efficient operation.

The single new residential dwelling on site will ensure that the poultry manager and their family have a suitable living space. In addition, the location of the dwelling on the site means that the use of private transport will be reduced as there is no requirement for the worker to travel to work.

In situations such as this case for the poultry site at Green Farm, rural dwellings are important for the sustainability and viability of rural businesses with the birds requiring 24/7 care and management.

7.2 Local Planning Policy

Herefordshire Core Strategy

The Herefordshire Core Strategy (HCS) was adopted on 16th October 2015. The most relevant policies in respect of this application would appear to be RA3, RA4, RA6, SS5 –SS7, LD1-LD4, and SD1-4. MT1

Policy RA3 – Herefordshire's Countryside, which controls occupation and limits residential development in the open countryside, unless one or more of the following criteria is satisfied;

1. Meeting of an agricultural or forestry need or other farm diversification enterprise for a worker to live permanently at or near their place of work and complies with Policy RA4; or
2. The subject property accompanies and is necessary to the establishment or growth of a rural enterprise, and complies with Policy RA4; or
3. Involves the replacement of an existing dwelling (with a lawful residential use) that is comparable in size and scale with, and is located in the lawful domestic curtilage, of the existing dwelling; or
4. Would result in the sustainable re-use of a redundant or disused (building(s) where it complies with

Policy RA5; or

5. Is rural exception housing in accordance with Policy H2; or

6. is of exceptional quality and innovative design satisfying the design criteria set out in Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework and achieves sustainable standards of design and construction;

In relation to the above policy, points 1, 2 and 6 of RA3 are relevant to this application, with there being an agricultural need for the full time poultry manager to live permanently at Uphampton Farm poultry site, as detailed fully within this report.

Isolated residential development is justified when accommodation is required to enable rural enterprise workers to live at, or in the immediate vicinity of, their place of work to provide essential supervision and management.

Policy RA4 – Agricultural, forestry and rural enterprise dwellings, states that proposals for dwellings associated with agricultural, forestry and rural enterprises will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there is a sustained essential functional need for the dwelling and it forms an essential part of a financially sustainable business.

As detailed within the planning policy the following points have been considered and satisfied to support the essential need for a dwelling at the poultry site;

Clear evidence of Intention and evidence the business has been planned on a sound financial basis

FC Jones & Co is an established poultry business, which is financially viable and a sustainable enterprise. Financial accounts have been analysed for the business, showing the viability of the enterprise and can be provided on a confidential basis.

The Functional Need

As detailed within section 6 above there is a functional need for the poultry manager to be present as part of the successful operation of the poultry site.

The functional need considers all unexpected situations that could arise during the poultry production cycle, along with the standard requirements for the management and operation of the poultry unit which requires a worker to be on hand 24 hours a day, seven days a week, which is outside of normal working hours. If a worker cannot be on site to meet these requirements then the viability and existence of the farming business would be threatened.

Whether Other Accommodation can fulfil the Functional Need

There are no available dwellings on the site or within the surrounding area.

The needs of rearing poultry is such that the manager is required to be site at all times. The difference to being on site immediately to deal with emergencies and being over 10-15 minutes away can lead to substantial losses to the flock numbers and financial implications.

A clearly established function need and that need related to a full-time worker

The functional need considers all unexpected situations that could arise from the poultry rearing activities on the poultry site, along with the standard requirements for the management and operation of the enterprise, which requires the poultry manager to be on hand 24 hours a day, seven days a week, which is outside normal working hours. If the poultry manager wasn't on site to meet these requirements then the viability and existence of the farm would be threatened.

Full details of the labour requirements associated with the broiler chicken rearing enterprise are detailed fully within section 6 above.

Policy RA6 – Rural Economy

This policy offers a broad-brush approach to the rural economy, supporting farming and expansion in principle, subject to appropriate environmental protection and mitigation.

The proposal presents a means for the applicant to expand the existing established business, which will in turn support the local supply chain. It is considered to be appropriate in scale, (given the nature of the intensive poultry industry and the need for economic viability) and in its setting is also considered to be acceptable being well screened from views and any impacts further reduced with mitigation measures.

Having regard to residential amenity the submitted technical reports, particularly those in respect of noise and odour demonstrate that the proposed development would not cause unacceptable adverse impacts to nearby residents. These reports form part of the accompanying Environmental Statement.

The impact of the proposed development have been considered within the submissions in the application and demonstrate that the proposal would not cause unacceptable adverse impacts to the amenity of nearby residents by virtue of design, noise, dust, lighting and odour.

In consideration of the information provided above, it is our professional view that the proposed dwelling for the poultry manager complies fully with both national and local planning policies and significant weight should be given to the necessary support and growth of the rural economy by permitting a dwelling on the poultry site for the poultry manager.

Policy SS5 – Employment Provision

This policy recognises that “land-based industries are seen as a strength of the county since they foster other business enterprises” and therefore, the policy states specifically that the “continuing development of the more traditional employment sectors such as farming and food and drink manufacturing will be supported”

It is suggested that the proposal represents a positive direct contribution to agricultural employment but more significantly represents a much larger means of supporting other local businesses and its employees. Implementation of the proposed development would represent a significant financial investment of circa £4M, a large proportion of which is likely to support local suppliers, contractors etc. The operation of the units will also support other local suppliers. This support to the local economy

helps support business, and safeguard and create jobs.

Policy SS6 – Environmental quality and local distinctiveness

This policy requires proposals to “conserve and enhance those environmental assets that contribute towards the county’s distinctiveness” particularly where designated sites are affected and in terms of biodiversity improvements. It urges an “integrated approach”, based on information to assess potential impacts on a variety of environmental components.

Whilst Crump Oak Wood is a designated Ancient Replanted Woodland it will not be adversely affected by the proposals.

It is considered that the proposal is in compliance with this policy and the applicant is happy to provide such protection, mitigation and enhancement measures that are recommended in the Ecological Assessment and Landscape Plan.

The proposed tree planting around the poultry units and allowing the existing hedgerows to grow-up plus the management of the wood to the east of the units will enhance the biodiversity of the site by providing improved habitat for various species.

Policies LD1 to LD4

These policies focus on the need to demonstrate that the landscape and biodiversity of the site and its surroundings have influenced matters such as site choice and design. They seek to protect and enhance geodiversity, biodiversity and habitats, with particular reference to designations and European Protected Species. Policies LD3 and LD4 are concerned with Green Infrastructure and Heritage Assets.

It is considered that the submitted Landscape and Visual Appraisal; Landscape Plan and ecological mitigation and enhancement measures demonstrate that the proposal is capable of meeting the relevant sections of these policies.

As stated above the proposed tree planting around the poultry units and allowing existing hedgerows to grow-up, plus better management of the wood will enhance the biodiversity of the site by providing habitat for various species.

Policies SD1 to SD4

These policies relate to;

- Sustainable design and energy efficiency
- Safeguarding residential amenity
- Renewable and low carbon energy generation
- Sustainable water management and water resources
- Wastewater treatment and river water quality

Policy SD1

The poultry houses will be constructed to high standards of energy and water efficiency. The houses will contain fibreglass insulation to reduce heat loss from the houses.

The new houses would use minimal energy through low level lighting, lighting movement sensors and would operate with greater environmental efficiency through the use of modern quality controlled equipment such as the proposed ventilation system.

The ventilation fans would be controlled by a temperature-controlled automatic system so that the number of fans operating at any one time depends on the monitored temperature. Therefore heating and cooling would be as required to maintain animal welfare levels and operations would be strictly monitored to avoid excessive energy use.

The drinker system will be fitted with drip cups to minimise wastage preventing excess moisture in the litter.

The poultry units will be heated via the biomass boilers. Water will be supplied to the site via a bore hole and/or mains water. A 3 phase electricity power supply will be installed.

Whilst natural resources are required for the new development the construction methods and computerised mechanical systems to be used demonstrate that energy efficient and environmental sustainability can be achieved. The buildings will have a life of 40 – 50 years and most materials will be

able to be recycled. The production of chickens from the site will for used in the UK, meaning that the requirement to import food will be reduced, therefore having sustainability benefits by reduced food miles and carbon foot-print.

Policy SD2

The submissions made within the application, (including the Odour Modelling Assessment and Noise Assessment which form part of the Environmental Statement) confirm that the development would safeguard residential amenity and would not cause unacceptable adverse impacts from odour, noise, light or air contamination or cause ground water pollution.

Policy SD3 relates to flood risk.

The site is within flood zone 1. An appropriate means of dealing with surface water run-off from the proposed development is proposed with the use of a detention pond to the south of the site, with suitable capacity, which will ensure that the surface water runoff from the developed site will be no greater than existing.

There are no significant impacts associated with the development in relation to drainage or flood risk.

Policy SD4 concerns waste water treatment and river water quality. Dirty water from cleaning the poultry units will be collect in a sealed system and stored in an underground tank. This dirty water will be taken off-site to be spread on farmland on the applicant's farm holding or third party farmland in appropriate conditions. The spreading of such dirty water on farmland is permitted provided that it is done in the correct way. DEFRA guidelines on spreading dirty water and manure is contained within the Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations 2015 so must be adhered to. DEFRA and the Environment Agency can sanction and potential prosecute those who do not comply with the regulations or pollute watercourses.

As stated above although the spreading of manure, including chicken manure from the proposed units is permitted subject to the regulations all the litter will be taken off-site to third-party sites. Records of the amount of manure removed and where it has been taken to will be kept.

Clean surface water from the site will be discharged to a detention pond before discharging to an unnamed ditch which runs south-east of the site. This sustainable system of reducing the surface water

run-off rate and filtrating the clean water will ensure that local watercourse and designated protected rivers are protected.

Foul water from the proposed poultry managers dwelling and service building will be treated via an appropriately sized package treatment plant. As such there will be negligible risk of any possible contamination of the nearest water course.

Conclusion

It is considered that the scheme complies with the relevant policies of the Herefordshire Core Strategy and the broader policy objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

This is primarily because the site provides a suitable location for the size and scale of the proposal. Furthermore, as confirmed by technical reports, the proposed development is located a sufficient distance away from residential properties to prevent any harm to residential amenity.

Dirty water and clean surface water will be collected and attenuated to ensure that there is no negative impact on water courses or rivers. The existing and proposed landscaping will limit any impact on the landscape and limit visual impact. The proposed ecological mitigation and enhancement measures will ensure that no protected species are harmed and that the ecological and biodiversity value of the site and surrounding area is improved.

In our professional view significant weight should be given to the necessity to support and grow the rural agricultural economy which should be read in conjunction with Chapter 3 of the NPPF.

8 CONCLUSION

The proposed development is required to meet growing demand for the poultry industry and to diversify the existing farm business so that it has a sustainable business plan, which will help ensure that the farm is financially viable for the long-term term.

The expansion and diversification of an existing farming enterprise is supported by the NPPF and Herefordshire Core Strategy.

The site has no residential receptors within 400m of the proposed poultry units.

The location of the site adjacent to the A480 ensures that vehicles do not need to use minor roads and has good access links to Herford and other destinations. An appropriate access can be provided for HGV movements to and from the site, including visibility splays and the traffic movements generated from the proposed development can be safely accommodated on the local highway network.

The use of the site will remain as agricultural and remain in food production. The size, scale and layout of the proposed development can be accommodated in the immediate and wider landscape. The site is visually enclosed by landform and vegetation, with limited effects on visual amenity.

Additional information has been provided in the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) and technical reports, which has been submitted as part of this application. The technical reports demonstrate that the proposed development will not cause significant environmental impact.

In view of the information provided through this Statement and the accompanying documents submitted it is considered that the proposed scheme meets the requirements as set out in the relevant National and Local Planning Policy