



To: All Heads of Planning

12 June 2018

Dear Colleague

I wish to remind Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) of the need to fully consider the effects of intensive agricultural development when determining planning applications and invite you to participate in future work on this area.

Strong rural economies are essential in creating and sustaining vibrant rural places and communities. The planning system should support economic and employment growth in the countryside wherever it is considered appropriate. In adopting a constructive approach towards agricultural development we need to ensure significant consideration is given to environmental protection as well as the well-being of people and the impacts on natural and cultural resources.

Large intensive agricultural units usually require planning permission, and where appropriate, LPAs are advised to put in place appropriate policies in Local Development Plans in order to facilitate the sustainable consideration of this type of development.

Intensive agricultural units particularly pig and poultry farms, can affect both sensitive habitats and the local population. This is largely through the release of pollutants, including: ammonia; nutrients from manure, litter and slurry; effluent discharges; dust; odour; and noise.

There is the need to exercise particular care when considering developments which would bring livestock units within close proximity to sensitive land uses such as homes, schools, hospitals, office development or sensitive environmental areas. Importantly, while an individual intensive livestock development may be acceptable, the cumulative impacts resulting from similar developments nearby should also be taken into account.

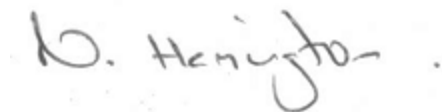
To assist in the consideration of these developments, last year Natural Resources Wales (NRW) issued updated guidance for the assessment of potentially polluting emissions from intensive poultry units. This guidance is for use by LPAs, and their respective Environmental Health Departments on any relevant applications. The

same advice is used by NRW in the environmental permitting process for sites holding over 40,000 birds. <https://naturalresources.wales/permits-and-permissions/installations/intensive-farming-pigs-and-poultry/?lang=en>

While environmental permitting and local controls, such as statutory nuisance, may manage the ongoing effects of development, the planning system should consider the relationship between neighbouring and potentially conflicting land uses in the first instance.

As we develop a post European Union system of agricultural policy, in the context of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, there is increasing interest in the role of intensive agriculture. To consider the future role planning may have I would like to invite LPAs, who have an interest in this area, to work with Welsh Government officials to look at how analysis of nitrate pollution and odorous emissions such as ammonia, and their cumulative impacts, can be better assessed in light of local circumstances. If you would like to know more please contact Hywel Butts on 0300 025 1619 or [Hywel.butts@gov.wales](mailto:Hywel.butts@gov.wales)

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "N. Hemington". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

**Neil Hemington**  
Chief Planner  
Planning Directorate