

PLANNING STATEMENT

**PROPOSED AGRICULTURAL WORKERS DWELLING AT
DEEPING POULTRY FARM
DEEPING ST NICHOLAS**

APPLICANT: D V VENTURES LTD

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report has been commissioned by D V Ventures Ltd of Mount Farm, Shirley, Ashbourne, Derbyshire, DE6 3AR.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide an objective appraisal of the agricultural business operated at Deeping Poultry Unit, Deeping St Nicholas, in connection with a planning application for an additional agricultural workers dwelling on the holding.
- 1.3 This report has been prepared having regard to paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework which outlines the planning policy criteria for agricultural workers dwellings.
- 1.4 This report has been prepared by Ian Pick. Ian Pick is a specialist agricultural and rural planning consultant. He holds a Bachelor of Science with Honours Degree in Rural Enterprise and Land Management from Harper Adams Agricultural College, and is a Professional Member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, being qualified in the Rural Practice Division of the Institution.
- 1.5 Ian Pick has 19 years experience specialising in agricultural and rural planning, whilst employed by MAFF, ADAS, Acorus and most recently, Ian Pick Associates Limited.

2. AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 D V Ventures Ltd own an established poultry unit at Deeping Poultry Farm, Deeping St Nicholas. The existing poultry unit extends to 10 No. poultry buildings, together with associated infrastructure, including access, hardstandings, feed bins, boilers and site office. The existing poultry unit houses at total of 399,000 birds. The site is operated by Moy Park Ltd.

- 2.2 The applicants have been granted planning permission to expand the existing business at Deeping Poultry Farm through the erection of 6 No. additional poultry buildings. The additional buildings will each house up to 56,833 birds and will increase the capacity of the site to 740,000 birds.
- 2.3 Planning permission H03-1289-16 grants planning permission for the erection of 6 No. additional broiler rearing units and associated bulk bins. The proposed poultry buildings are all identical and extend to 109.729m x 24.389m with an eaves height of 2.9m and a ridge height of 6.147m. The proposal includes 9 No. additional bulk bins. The expansion granted under H03-1289-16 is proposed to be carried out in the summer of 2017.
- 2.4 The site operates as an intensive broiler unit, rearing chicks from day old through to finished table weight.
- 2.5 The poultry buildings on the site are all purpose built broiler rearing units, constructed of steel frames, with the external cladding being profile sheeting. The buildings are all fitted with feeders, drinkers, biomass heating and fan assisted ventilation systems. Each building includes a control room which houses a computer system which controls the systems operated in the buildings.
- 2.6 The control room includes a specialist computer system which is thermostatically controlled to maintain the desired temperature within the bird housing area, using the heating and ventilation systems. Feeding and lighting is also controlled by the computer system.
- 2.7 The use of the buildings is for the rearing of broilers from day old chicks through to finished table weight. The broiler rearing cycle operates on an all in all out system, and each cycle takes 48 days. The broilers are reared for approximately 38 days following which the building is cleaned out in preparation for the next batch of birds. The buildings are empty for cleaning

and preparation for 10 days at the end of the growing cycle. The unit operates with 7.5 flocks per birds per annum.

- 2.8 At the end of each flock cycle, the poultry manure is removed from the buildings. The manure removal process is undertaken with a mechanical loader. All manure will be loaded from the sheds into trailers which will be sheeted and transported off site for disposal through biomass power stations.
- 2.9 Following the removal of the manure, the buildings are washed with high pressure hoses. The inside of the proposed buildings are drained into a sealed underground dirty water containment tank.
- 2.10 The site operates with a permit from the Environment Agency under the IPPC permitting regime.

Farm Labour

- 2.11 Farm labour is currently provided by a farm manager and two full time workers. Following the current expansion of the site, it will be necessary to employ an additional full time manager and two additional full time stockman on the site.
- 2.12 The standard labour calculation for the livestock within business is shown below, based on standard published labour data in the Farm Management Pocketbook by John Nix, 47th Edition 2017.

Enterprise	Labour Requirement per Head / Place (standard man days)	Total Enterprise Labour Requirement (standard man days)
5,550,000	0.002	11,100
Total		11,100

** It is generally accepted that 300 standard man days are provided by stockmen, therefore, the unit has a standard labour requirement of 37 full-time workers.*

- 2.13 The business has a labour requirement of 37 full-time workers based on standard data. The business will be operated with 6 full-time workers on the site.
- 2.14 The labour requirements on the poultry unit vary substantially during the different stages of the flock cycle, with peak requirements for labour during catching of birds and cleaning and washing of the buildings. Additional contract staff are brought in to provide additional labour during peak labour periods.

Farm Dwellings

- 2.15 There is currently one agricultural workers dwelling on the application site at Deeping Farm which is occupied by the unit manager. A second agricultural workers dwelling is proposed to enable a further essential poultry manager to reside on the site to provide for the supervision requirements of the poultry unit.

3. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The applicant propose erecting an additional dwelling on the farm for occupation by a newly employed manager. The application site is a large poultry farming operation, which will extend to 740,000 birds once the current expansion is completed. The application site is an intensive livestock unit, and is reliant on automated ventilation, heating, feed and water systems. The vast numbers of the livestock are such that it is not possible for a single resident worker to provide the necessary supervision of the unit and maintain animal welfare.

4. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 Paragraph 55 of the NPPF states that “55. To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby. Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as:
- the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;

5. ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 Essential need is principally determined by the nature and scale of the enterprises operated and the operations which out of necessity have to be carried out to effectively manage and supervise those enterprises. In this case the business operates an intensive livestock unit extending to 740,000 broiler chickens.
- 5.2 The proposed expanded poultry unit extends to 740,000 birds. The operation of the poultry unit is such that there is a high demand for out of hours labour. The out of hours labour includes monitoring and chicks, feed, water, ventilation and temperature throughout each growing cycle. The unit requires supervision on a round the clock basis. At certain times within the growing cycle there are greater demands for out of hours labour, such as during the first 4 days, 3 hourly stock and system checks are required. During thinning and clearing the site at the end of the cycle, labour is required for catching and supervision, 24 hours per day.
- 5.3 The unit is also heavily reliant on automated systems for ventilation and heating, feed and water. All of these systems must be monitored constantly as failure of the systems can cause serious welfare issues for the birds. Outside of

the periods where out of hours demands on labour are high, it remains essential for workers to be immediately available to attend to emergencies. Emergencies can occur at any time, and timing of emergencies cannot be predicted, hence skilled workers need to be available at all times.

- 5.4 Ventilation within the poultry buildings is a thermostat controlled automatic system and is critically important for the welfare of the birds. Failure of the ventilation system can cause internal temperatures to rise very rapidly. Rising temperatures initially cause heat stress to the birds and followed by suffocation and death if not immediately rectified. Skilled workers must reside on the site in order to provide supervision of the ventilation system which requires immediate action in the event of failure. The unit will have an auto-start back up generator in the event of power failure, however, other mechanical causes of ventilation failure require manual intervention. It is also necessary for a worker to check that the backup generator has in fact started in the event of power failure.
- 5.5 The feed and water systems within the building are also automated. Failure of this system requires rectification immediately to avoid distress to the birds.
- 5.6 The lighting system within the poultry unit is controlled by a timeswitch. Birds are nervous by nature and disruption of the lighting system causes panic. Panic amongst large numbers of birds leads to smothering. A smothering incident requires immediate physical action by stockmen to mitigate losses.
- 5.7 There is a large requirement for out of hours labour associated with the poultry unit, and a continuous requirement for checking the stock, and monitoring the automatic systems. The demand on out of hours labour differs based on the period of the stock cycle, however, with the exception of the short cleanout period, there is an essential requirement for skilled stockmen to be immediately available at all times.

Financial Viability

- 5.8 The applicant business is a large scale poultry rearing operation. The business is financially sound and viable with clear prospects of remaining so. A letter from Moy Park Ltd regarding financial viability is attached with this application.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The agricultural business operated at Deeping Poultry Farm is a large intensive livestock enterprise. The business has a site specific functional need for at least two full-time livestock worker to reside within sight and sound of the livestock buildings. This is essential in order to provide for the essential supervision requirements of the poultry unit and the welfare of the large numbers of birds accommodated on the farm.
- 6.2 The business is financially sound and viable with clear prospects of remaining so.

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