

P-06-1232 Stop the proliferation of intensive poultry units (IPUs) by legislating and introduce a moratorium until this can be achieved, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 01.09.22

Good afternoon

Thanks for this information and the news that the issues raised will be considered. I would like noted that there were 5,920 signatures of support. I have included the words of the petition on page 4 for information and reference.

The petition asks for the following outcomes:

1. A moratorium on any poultry units in Powys, and across Wales until the publication of a specific technical advice note as identified.
2. That appropriate, proper and considered guidance is consulted upon and published in the form of a TAN, as stated by Lesley Griffiths in 2019. Action was also promised early 2018. This TAN should ensure planning authorities cannot ignore the local and environmental issues caused by these developments; and must be cognisant of local and national policies, TANs and DMs, including Well Being and local people, not just those working in agriculture.
3. We ask for essential regulation and guidance for planning authorities. The use of delegated powers, which denies the public a voice, should also be addressed.
4. We would also ask that all information pertaining to an application, including those under permitted development, should be available to the public. Powys have a policy of not publishing comments on their planning portal, and indeed, misleading the public by stating there are no comments. Surely this is outside the rules and processes; using GDPR as a reason/excuse is unacceptable and inaccurate. In fact, their behaviour puts them in breach of GDPR.

To answer the questions you pose:

1. What are your thoughts on the attached document?

- a. The document does not address the issues raised. It also lacks detail and timelines.
- b. It seems that the Minister for Climate Change is working on a TAN for Agriculture development. Is this accurate?
- c. Is there 'joined up thinking' between the departments?
- d. There is no comment from the Minister for Agriculture. Why not?
- e. River pollution is only part of the problem.

2. Does it adequately address the issues that you raised?

I'm afraid not. It repeats information already published. There have been no actions and there seems to be no willingness to act. The issues are not limited to rivers.

a. This communication is from Julie James, the Climate Minister; she talks of agriculture operating outside the town and country planning system, but as agricultural developments have become more intensive and that they are being now being dealt with more frequently by planning authorities. The concern here is, as mentioned in the petition, that there is no guidance for planning offices to deal with units of less than 40,000 birds. The lack of guidance means that the environment, including rivers and aquifers, can be irreparably damaged by these farming practices. We also know that Powys Planning continue granting permissions for bird rearing developments despite significant public objections, examples below:

1. Two years ago a change.org petitions called for Powys County Council to action an immediate moratorium on planning permissions for new or extended poultry units in the county until the full environmental - and community - impacts of those we already have can be assessed and reduced. This was rejected by PCC. There were over 80,000 signatures.
2. CPRW¹. comment that in Powys in the past 5 years there have been
 - a) 156 applications (not counting withdrawn applications)
 - b) 139 applications have been approved and one refusal
 - c) 7 were approved in June 2020
 - d) 23 approvals were voted through by the Planning Committee. 116 were decided by a Planning Officer under “delegated powers”.
 - e) Of the 156 applications in the past five years, there have been 5 refusals but 4 have been resubmitted. One of these has been refused again on highways grounds: one has been approved: 2 are waiting.
 - f) Altogether, there are 21 awaiting determination.
3. In an open letter² to PCC the residents of a number of villages affected by the units requested they:
 1. Implement a moratorium in respect of all current and future IPU and other intensive factory farm applications until you are able to accurately take stock of the current situation.
 2. Undertake a comprehensive environmental survey to ascertain if current air and water quality in parts of Powys with a concentration of IPUs are near, or already beyond, saturation point.
 3. Properly assess the human health considerations to residents posed by the already large number of factory farms present in Powys (based on actual studies rather than desk-based predictions).
 4. Provide details of how Powys CC takes into account the provisions of the ‘ Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015’ when determining applications.

¹ <http://ecotipus.co.uk/cprw-update-powys-county-council-poultry-planning-frenzy>

² <http://ecotipus.co.uk/open-letter-from-residents-to-powys-council>

5. Cease determination of all IPU applications until the new Intensive farming TAN is in place to properly guide planning officers in their decision-making process.

b. It seems that the Town and Country Planning Intensive Agriculture Working Group has moved away from the focus initially stated of "the planning system looking at those impact in the best way possible." and are now focussing on river pollution. The impact of these units is not limited to rivers and aquifers. The following must also be considered:

- the impact on local amenities
- the health and well being of individuals affected by these developments
- impacts of ammonia emissions and the resulting damage to ecosystems
- air pollution affecting health
- foul odours and heavy traffic on narrow rural lanes
- light pollution
- noise pollution
- the impacts of industrial-scale development on rural landscapes

Development Management guidance clearly states areas for consideration. Strategic Policies clearly state the rules. As examples, please reference DM1, 2, 3 & 4 and SP7. The development of these units in Powys seem to be exempt from the examples above.

Please view <http://www.brecon-and-radnor-cprw.wales/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/IPU-ALLdataV4-Master-20190707-3-Counties-FINAL-2.0-20190711.pdf> to see the location and number of units of units in Powys and surrounding counties.

There is more than sufficient evidence that Powys Planning do not take into account the comments of local people and businesses. They are obtuse and not helpful when enquiries are made. They do not enforce restrictions they impose. Although anecdotal, they have also stated that they do not take into account the views of community councils who are the representatives of the local communities.

3. Do you have further questions in response?

In addition to the questions posed throughout I would ask why has no action been taken and seemingly, little progress made. Covid is not a good enough reason. People continued to work throughout the pandemic.

4. Is there anything additional that you would like the Committee to know at this stage, either in response to this document or as an update to the Committee.

This is a critical issue for many who live in Wales. Action has been promised for a number of years, during which time planning for the units continues to be granted. There are many other communications and conversations with the Senedd and the various parties around this issue but still no action. The damage to the local amenities, landscape and lives continues. These are severe issues in Powys.

The text of the petition as published at <https://petitions.senedd.wales/petitions/244997>

“There are many intensive poultry units in Wales. Powys has the unfortunate reputation of being one of the IPU hot spots. There have been 147 IPU applications granted by PCC. IPU's bring with them many issues including pollution of rivers and land, smell, ammonia, traffic, 24x7 noise and light. To many, the practice of intensive poultry production is cruel and unnecessary.

Despite many villages being blighted by these units there is still nothing being done to stop them. We need our politicians to act.

More details

Another small village in Powys is the latest in a long line to be threatened by the building of an intensive poultry unit. This is a rural area, the roads are walked regularly by the people of the village and visitors. The landscape is stunning, there is no light pollution and the silence is, wonderfully, deafening. The River Cain runs through the Village and close to the site feeds into the River Severn.

Despite many villages being blighted by these units there is still nothing being done to stop them. We need our politicians to act. So, this petition is about getting the politicians to legislate; they have promised this for years; they accept this is a serious issue but still the legislation is missing.

A TAN (Technical Advice Note) regarding IPU's was promised in 2019. Lesley Griffiths, the Agriculture Minister has stated that something must be done, particularly with regard to the smaller units. But still nothing.”