



# **Planning for the Planet**

## **Technical guide: Northern Ireland**

Planning for the Planet is a commitment that councils can make to signal leadership on environmental issues. The following guide has been developed alongside planning experts and is designed to provide council officers with everything they need to implement the Planning for the Planet commitment. We have included a brief overview of the problem, but you can find more in our evidence base documents and councillor briefing.

## What's the problem with intensive livestock production?

- Intensive agriculture is the leading cause of river pollution and wildlife decline in the UK, resulting in <u>the loss of the loss of almost half of</u> <u>Britain's natural biodiversity</u>.
- Intensive livestock developments provide just one or two, often low-paid, jobs and have been found to harm other rural business sectors.
- <u>Farmers and local economies receive a pittance from intensive livestock supply chains</u>, with profits being diverted to supermarkets, processors and supply companies.
- 69% of UK adults see factory farming as prioritising profits over tackling the climate emergency.
- <u>40% of the UK's most productive agricultural land</u> is used to grow food for farm animals, with half of the UK's wheat harvest fed to farm animals each year rather than people.
- We need to reduce meat and dairy consumption by <u>up to 50% by 2050</u> to meet our statutory climate targets.

#### What do we mean by Intensive Livestock Production?

Sometimes referred to as 'megafarms', 'factory farms', or 'intensive production units' (or, for chickens, 'intensive poultry units'), intensive livestock operations are the most industrialised and polluting agricultural operations, with animals kept indoors for most or all their lives, in crowded conditions with

little or no natural light. They are more akin to an industrial operation than a farm, with associated traffic generation, noxious processes, waste and effluent treatment, in addition to the wider issues of biodiversity loss and greenhouse gas emissions.

For the purposes of planning policy, intensive livestock operations are normally defined as those which require planning permission and a license from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency to operate. These are those that hold at least 40,000 poultry or 2,000 pigs or 750 breeding sows.

Intensive livestock production is distinct from more sustainable, higher welfare and nature-friendly <u>agro-ecological farming</u>, which is more resilient to climate change and vastly better for local communities and the planet.

#### The Planning for the Planet 4-step process

By joining Planning for the Planet, we are asking councils to implement the following 4-step process.

## STEP 1: Assess the impact of intensive livestock production in your area (within 6 months)

The first step is to find out how big an issue this is in your area. A template self-assessment tool has been provided below, but there may be other issues you wish to consider, and other sources of information.

Questions for your assessment (please fill in)	How to find this information
The extent of intensive livestock production in your	To find the number of intensive livestock production facilities:
<ul> <li>area.</li> <li>1. Do you have intensive livestock production in your area?</li> <li>2. How many animals do you estimate are in intensive livestock operations in your area?</li> <li>3. Any incidents of breaches of environmental permits?</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Search previous planning applications in your council, to see roughly how many have been approved.</li> <li>An <u>environmental permit</u> (called 'EP 6.09') is required to rear pigs or poultry intensively in an installation with more than 40,000 places for poultry, or 2,000 places for production pigs (over 30kg), or 750 places for sows. Helpfully, the Environment Agency publish permits that they issue. You can search for all permits in your area <u>here</u>. The results won't <i>all</i> be intensive livestock, but many will be.</li> <li>Information on the structure and type of farms <u>by local authority</u> is available from Defra's farm survey team. In the UK, about 70% farm animals live in intensive conditions, including 60% pigs and 95% broiler chickens, so if the number of these livestock is high, there is a very high chance you have lots of intensive farming.</li> <li><u>CIWF's agriculture map</u> is also a great tool to show the prevalence of intensive livestock farming across the UK where data is available.</li> </ul>

The status of water in your area	• You can find out the 'classification' of the water in your area on the DAERA website.
<ul><li>4. What is the status of your waterways and what are the main causes of pollution?</li><li>5. Do you have any safe bathing rivers or lakes?</li></ul>	• Generalised water quality statistics and water pollution trends for Northern Ireland can be found <u>here</u> .
Local air quality	You can find maps of the concentrations of the above pollutants in an interactive map.
<ol> <li>Do you currently have high concentrations of any harmful pollutants commonly resulting from agriculture in your area?</li> </ol>	
Impact on climate change	Using the information from Q1 and Q2, you can make a rough estimate of the GHG emissions from your intensive livestock
7. What is a rough estimate of the GHG emissions	production as follows:
from intensive livestock production in your	Chicken: Estimated annual GHG emissions from one chicken shed with 20,000 capacity = 2,058 T CO2 equivalent
arear	Pigs: Estimated annual GHG emissions from one pig shed with 2,000 capacity = 2,708 T CO2e
	Dairy cows: Estimated annual GHG emissions from an intensive cattle farm of 2,000 cows = 9750t CO2e per year
	(calculations in Annex 2)
Impact on deforestation, habitats and biodiversity	Using the information from Q1 and Q2, you can make a rough estimate of the land footprint from your intensive livestock production as follows:
current intensive livestock production?	Chicken: Estimated land requirement for one chicken shed of 20,000 capacity = 2,520 sq km land
'Effective use of land' consideration	Pigs. Estimated land requirement for one pig shed with 2,000 capacity = 3,819 sq km land
9. Risk that intensive livestock farming in your	(calculations in Annex 2)
area is contributing to deforestation? 10. Do you have any Special Areas of Conservation?	<u>A study</u> of small-scale, agroecological farms (including vegetables, fruit and some meat and dairy) from across the UK found that it is possible to achieve much higher yields per hectare in agroecological systems (as well as higher employment, more social benefits and higher biodiversity).
	The likelihood of UK feed being from deforested land is high. <u>Research</u> last year from WWF linked meat in European diets with widespread deforestation and conversion of habitats in South America.
	There's a map to show areas of conservation on the DAERA website.
Impact on the local economy 11. Estimated jobs created in intensive livestock production	Planning applications make an estimate of the jobs created - likely to be 1-2 per development. You can therefore make a rough estimate of the contribution of intensive livestock production to local employment using your calculations above.
	More localised, sustainable food systems create more and better jobs. (Please see the evidence base on our website for more detail on this)
Local Character	
12. Do you have SSIs or other protected areas, or AONBs?	You can check on the designations of land in your area on the <u>DAERA website</u> .

Policy and local culture	
<ul> <li>13. What opportunities do you have for a thriving and diverse local food culture:</li> <li>Do you have a local food strategy?</li> <li>Do you have a local food partnership?</li> <li>Does your council include food and farming in your biodiversity action plan or climate plan?</li> <li>Is there a local food culture and economy that can be supported to grow, for example alternative routes to markets for farmers, speciality foods, markets, veg boxes, cooperatives, direct routes to market etc?</li> <li>Does the council have a policy to support sustainable and locally sourced food through public procurement?</li> </ul>	Find out if you have a <u>Local Food Partnership</u> Check out Sustain's <u>Every Mouthful Counts report</u> to see how well food and farming is integrated into your council's climate and biodiversity policies.

#### STEP 2: Publish this impact assessment transparently (within 6 months)

Allow expert and public scrutiny, including by the local authority's environment, audit, and planning teams.

## STEP 3: Adopt planning policies that are right for your area (within 2 years)

Assess the policy solutions best for your council, considering the impact that intensive livestock production is having now, your biodiversity and climate commitments, and the status of your air and water, and put this policy into place.

The specific policy you adopt will depend on your council. Our recommendations are, as a minimum:

- 1) Include a supportive statement for sustainable farming, land use and good food in key planning policies, so you are supporting sustainable agriculture and food in a joined up and holistic way.
- 2) Require developers to complete an enhanced Impact Assessment for intensive livestock operations to include specific information on GHG emissions, biodiversity and health impacts, so you can properly assess the risks
- 3) Require developers to demonstrate that all farm developments are of the highest standards for sustainable development, biodiversity net gain and climate change

These policies could be adopted as part of the Local Plan, as supplementary planning documents, or via a climate emergency compliance form.

Examples of the above are provided in Annex 1. Further examples of the kinds of policy solutions that might work for you will become available to councils that join Planning for the Planet. Ideally, this should be in place within two years, but this will depend on your policy review cycle.

### **STEP 4: Influence Wider Progress: Support our calls for better planning and farming policy across the UK**

Councils can support a transition to a good food system in which farmers see improved livelihoods and the production of more, better healthier food by diversifying to a model other than intensive livestock. As part of your work to support diverse and resilient food communities, councils can:

- Set up and/or support a Food Partnership, or get involved with the partnership if you have one already.
- Support sustainable and local food through your procurement policy, to support good farming with public money.
- Support wildlife-friendly and agroecological models of farming through your planning, including market gardens, and the infrastructure needed to support a localised food system (see <u>Sustain's Fringe Farming report</u> for recommendations).
- Protect existing allotments and community food growing spaces, and where there is demonstrated demand, increase these resources.

You can also use your voice by encouraging other councils to follow your example and call for policy change at a national level.

#### Why are these issues important for planning in Northern Ireland?

National planning policy includes a number of statements in support of sustainable farming systems and against intensive livestock. This table will help you ensure the local policy you develop around intensive livestock operations is clearly linked with national planning priorities.

Policies relevant to planning and	The NI Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) is a strategic and long-term vision. Local policies and decisions must be "in general conformity".
intensive livestock production	The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) provides overarching principles from which Councils develop Local Development Plans (LDPs). It is
	material to individual planning decisions and appeals.
	Local Development plans are monitored and reviewed annually
	Key: (RDS) = <u>Regional Development Strategy</u>
	(SPPS) = <u>Strategic Planning Policy Statement</u>
Climate Change and the	RDS 2.10 - One of the aims of the RDS is '• Take actions to reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate adaptation to climate change'
environment	We need to reduce harmful green house gas emissions and promote sustainable construction, consumption and production.
	RG9: Reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate mitigation and adaptation to climate change whilst improving air quality
	(SPPS) - 3.10 A central challenge in furthering sustainable development is mitigating and adapting to climate change, whilst improving air quality. This
	includes the need to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change and to respond to the impacts brought about by

	climate change. A key pledge of the Executive is 'to continue to work towards a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by at least 35% on 1990 levels
	3.13 The planning system should therefore help to mitigate and adapt to climate change by:
	- Shaping new and existing developments in ways that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and positively build community resilience to problems such
	as extreme heat or flood risk
	- requiring the siting, design and layout of all new development to limit likely greenhouse gas emissions and minimise resource and energy
	requirements
Economic impacts and sustainable	(SPPS) 3.8 sustainable development should be permitted, having regard to the development plan and all other material considerations, unless the
development	proposed development will cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance. In practice this means that development that
	accords with an up-to-date development plan should be approved and proposed development that conflicts with an up-to-date development plan
	should be refused, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise
	3.9: In formulating policies and plans and in determining planning applications planning authorities will also be guided by the precautionary approach
	that, where there are significant risks of damage to the environment, its protection will generally be paramount, unless there are imperative reasons
	of overriding public interest.
	6.66 The policy objectives for development in the countryside are to: - manage growth to achieve appropriate and sustainable patterns of
	development which supports a vibrant rural community;
	- conserve the landscape and natural resources of the rural area and to protect it from excessive, inappropriate or obtrusive development and from
Diadius with / habitat lass	
Biodiversity / habitat loss	(RDS) The PDS contains a number of 'Degional Cuidance's
And Making an effective use of land	The RDS contains a number of Regional Guidance . RG11: Conserve, protect and where possible, enhance our built beritage and our natural environment
Waking an effective use of land	3 31: Sustain and anhance hindiversity in line with the objective of the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy to halt the loss of indigenous species
	and habitats
	3.27 Protect and extend the ecosystems and habitats that can reduce or buffer the effects of climate change. Many ecosystems and habitats (such as
	peat bogs) act as sinks or stores for carbon if undisturbed
	(SPPS) 4.38 Our environment must therefore be managed in a sustainable manner in accordance with the Executive's commitment to preserve and
	improve the built and natural environment and halt the loss of biodiversity.
	6.171 Sustaining and enhancing biodiversity is fundamental to furthering sustainable development. The Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy and
	EU Biodiversity Strategy seek to halt the loss of biodiversity and ecosystems services by 2020. Furthermore, the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act
	(Northern reland) 2011 places a statutory duty on every public body to further the conservation of biodiversity.
	6.192 Planning nermission should only be granted for a development proposal which is not likely to result in the unaccentable adverse impact on or
	damage to known: priority habitats, priority species, active peatland, ancient and long-established woodland; features of earth science conservation
	importance: features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna: rare or threatened native species, wetlands (includes
	river corridors); or other natural heritage features worthy of protection, including trees and woodland.
Health	RDS 2.10: Promote development which improves the health and well-being of communities
	3.29: It is a basic premise of the environmental justice agenda that everyone should have the right to, and be able to live in, a healthy environment,
	with access to sufficient and appropriate environmental resources for a healthy life

Impacts on local communities and their character	SPPS: 6.87 The guiding principle for policies and proposals for economic development in the countryside is to facilitate proposals likely to benefit the rural economy and support rural communities, while protecting or enhancing rural character and the environment, consistent with strategic policy elsewhere in the SPPS.
Pollution	RDS: 3.24 - It is important that Northern Ireland plays its part by reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for the impacts of climate change (SPPS) 6.321 When decision-taking important considerations will include: the types of waste to be deposited or treated and the proposed method of disposal; impacts on human health and the environment (including environmental pollution); roads/transport considerations (particularly where facilities depend on large transfer of materials, often generating a substantial volume of traffic) Annex A:planning authorities should consider the location of development which may give rise to air pollution. They should also ensure that other developments are, as far as practicable, not adversely affected by major existing or potential future, sources of air pollutiontaking into account the existing or likely future air quality in an area and having regard to any local Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) action plans In managing development, planning authorities should recognise that air quality can be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

## **Annex 1: Example planning policies to control intensive livestock operations**

There are a number of routes to taking a proactive approach to planning policy on this issue. These are just a few examples of text to get you thinking. Example policies and specialist advice is available to councils that have joined Planning for the Planet.

#### **Example Supportive statement – For your local plan**

Currently, our food and farming system is responsible for a third of climate emissions and is the main cause of biodiversity loss and wildlife decline in the UK, including water pollution incidents. A Sustainable and healthy future means transitioning to a better food system. Planning policy will support:

- Supporting farming which helps meet climate and nature goals, including agroecology and reducing livestock numbers
- Giving people opportunities to grow food through allotments and food growing spaces
- Infrastructure for a localised food economy, for example market spaces

#### **Requirements for Impact Assessments**

Environmental impact assessments are required for all planning applications that require an environmental permit. Better quality information at the planning application stage will assist the decision making process. To ensure impact assessments provide the information needed to understand the pollution they cause, they must include:

- Endogenic GHG emissions per year from the development (ie emissions from the animals themselves)
- GHG emissions from the operation (ie heating, lighting, scrubbing the air for pollutants, feed and animal transport)
- Feed requirements, including amount of feed consumed per year, the source of feed and composition of feed including kg soya and imported feed consumed per year
- Approximate land required to grow feed (so you can understand biodiversity impact)
- Any previous reported breaches of environmental standards (including water pollution) by all companies involved in the development

## **Requirements for all farm developments:**

- Biodiversity net gain happens on-farm.
- Net Zero happens on-farm.
- Scrubbers used to reduce ammonia pollution.
- Real living wage.

#### Annex 2: Calculations and what to do next

We would be delighted to have your council as part of Planning for the Planet. Doing so demonstrates your support for reversing the decline of our rivers and biodiversity and will ensure you have planning policy in place necessary to address the spread of toxic and polluting intensive livestock farms.

More information, including detailed evidence of the problems caused by intensive livestock to the environment and the economy on the <u>Planning for the</u> <u>Planet website</u>.

## **Register to join here**

#### Calculations for the GHG emissions from intensive chickens, pigs and dairy cows

#### Chickens:

Each broiler chicken produces about <u>1.5kg edible meat</u> and each kg meat causes <u>9.8kg CO2e</u>

Chicken sheds typically contain 20,000 birds and produce 7 cycles per year, which is 140,000 birds per year.

The annual GHG emissions from one chicken shed therefore = (1.5 x 9.8) x 140,000 = 2,058 T CO2 equivalent

#### Pigs:

Each pig produces about 55kg edible meat = (62% yield from 88kg carcasse), each kg pig meat emits 12.31kg CO2e, and reach slaughter weight in 24 weeks, allowing 2 cycles per year.

A shed of 2000 pigs emits an estimated (55 x 12.31) x 2000 x 2 = 2,708 T CO2e

#### Dairy cows:

Average GHG footprint for UK milk is 1.3kg CO2e per litre. Each cow produces about <u>7500litres</u> per year An intensive cattle farm of 2000 cows therefore emits roughly (1.3 x 7500) x 2000 = **9,750t CO2e per year** 

#### Calculations for the land footprint of intensive chickens and pigs

#### Chickens:

Each broiler chicken produces about 1.5kg edible meat and each kg meat requires 12sq metres land

Chicken sheds typically contain 20,000 birds and produce 7 cycles per year, which is 140,000 birds per year.

The annual land requirement for one chicken shed therefore =  $(1.5 \times 12) \times 140,000 = 2520$  sq km land

#### Pigs:

Each pig produces about 55kg edible meat = (62% yield from 88kg carcasse), each kg pig requires 17.36sq metres of land and reach slaughter weight in 24 weeks, allowing 2 cycles per year.

A shed of 2000 pigs uses an estimated (55 x 17.36) x 2000 x 2 = 3,819 sq km land