Planning for the Planet

Technical guide: Scotland.

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 the loss of the loss of almost half of Britain's natural biodiversity.
- Intensive livestock developments provide just one or two, often low-paid, jobs and have been found to harm other rural business sectors.
- Farmers and local economies receive a pittance from intensive livestock supply chains, 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.
- 40% of the UK's most productive agricultural land 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 up to 50% by 2050 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 Scottish Environment Protection 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 agro-ecological farming, 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 area. 1. Do you have intensive livestock operations in your area? 2. How many animals do you estimate are in intensive operations in your area? 3. Any incidents of breaches of environmental permits?	To find the number of intensive livestock operations: • Search previous planning applications in your council, to see roughly how many have been approved. • An environmental permit (called 'PPC') 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 here. The results won't *all* be industrialised agriculture, but many will be. • Information on the localised structure and type of farm is available from the Scottish Government website. 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. • CIWF's agriculture map is also a great tool to show the prevalence of industrial farming across the UK where data is available. To find out about breaches of environmental regulations:

	• You can download a full register of the enforcement actions taken following breaches of environmental permits on the SEPA website. • Note – the true extent of infringement of environmental permits is likely to be much greater than these data suggest, but cuts to monitoring resources mean incidents of pollution are thought to be being ignored.
The status of water in your area 4. What is the status of your waterways and what are the main causes of pollution? 5. Do you have any safe bathing rivers or lakes?	• You can find out the 'classification' of the water in your area on the SEPA website. You can also view summary tables of the challenges, and see the number of incidents of pollution from agriculture and rural land management. • You can also find out how many of your local rivers, lakes or other water courses are safe to swim here.
Local air quality 6. Do you currently have high concentrations of any harmful pollutants commonly resulting from agriculture in your area?	You can find maps of the concentrations of the above pollutants in an interactive map.
Impact on climate change 7. What is a rough estimate of the GHG emissions from intensive livestock operations in your area?	Using the information from Q1 and Q2, you can make a rough estimate of the GHG emissions from your intensive livestock production as follows: **Chicken**: Estimated annual GHG emissions from one chicken shed with 20,000 capacity = **2,058 T CO2 equivalent** **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 8. Roughly what is the land footprint of your current intensive livestock operations? **'Effective use of land' consideration** 9. Risk that intensive livestock operations in your area is contributing to deforestation? 10. Do you have any Special Areas of Conservation?	Using the information from Q1 and Q2, you can make a rough estimate of the land footprint from your intensive livestock production as follows: **Chicken**: Estimated land requirement for one chicken shed of 20,000 capacity = **2,520 sq km land** **Pigs**. Estimated land requirement for one pig shed with 2,000 capacity **= 3,819 sq km land** (calculations in Annex 2) A study 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. Research 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 Special Areas of Conservation on the SEPA website.
Impact on the local economy 11. Estimated jobs created in intensive livestock operations.	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 operations 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 SEPA website
Policy and local culture 13. What opportunities do you have for a thriving and diverse local food culture: • Do you have a local food strategy? • Do you have a local food partnership? • Does your council include food and farming in your biodiversity action plan or climate plan? • 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, co-operatives, direct routes to market etc? • Does the council have a policy to support sustainable and locally sourced food through public procurement?	Find out if you have a Local Food Partnership Check out Sustain's Every Mouthful Counts report 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 industrial 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 Development Plan, as supplementary planning guidance 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 Sustain's Fringe Farming report 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 Scotland?

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 intensive livestock operations.	Planning applications need to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Development Plan comprises:

	- National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) - The Local Development Plan (LDP) for the area (prepared by each Local Authority, with a requirement to take NPF4 into account when doing this) Potentially relevant material considerations include: - Scotland's Climate Change Plan, which sets out the Scottish Government's approach to achieving net zero emissions by 2045, and actions to be taken to meet climate emissions targets. - The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, which aims to halt biodiversity loss by 2030 and reverse it with large-scale restoration by 2045. It's a draft, final version due spring 2023. - Scotland's third land use strategy, which sets out the Scottish Government's vision, objectives and policies to achieve sustainable land use. - Good Food Nation Plans, which are to be produced under the Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act 2022 - Local Place Plans, which can be prepared by local communities, setting out the development they want to see in their local area. - Local Food Growing Strategies, which are to be prepared by each local authority under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 to identify land in the local authority area that may be used for local food growing initiatives. - Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement, published by the Scottish Government under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016. - Scotland's Environment Strategy, which creates an overarching framework for our strategies and plans concerning the environment and climate change. Key: (NPF4) = National Planning Framework 4 (SBS) = Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (LUS) = Scotland's third land use strategy (LPP) = Local Place Plan (LDP) = Local Development Plan (LFGS) = Local Food Growing Strategies (LRSS) = Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement

Climate Change and the environment	**NPF4** highlights the need for every decision on future development to contribute to making Scotland a more sustainable place, with: - **Policy 1** requiring significant weight to be given to the global climate and nature crises when considering all development proposals; - **Policy 2** setting out further requirements which seek to ensure that emissions from development are minimised; and - **Policy 4** stating that development proposals which have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment will not be supported. In addition: **- Scotland's Environment Strategy** states that, amongst other things: *"we need to make the best use of our productive land by reducing emissions from agriculture while producing high quality food and protecting nature*." And *"We will support the reduction of emissions from agriculture through our Programme for Government commitment to create a new agricultural transformation programme and by establishing an agricultural modernisation fund."* - Actions to deliver the Environment Strategy's outcomes in respect of tackling climate change are set out in the **Climate Change Plan**, which is backed by legislation, with chapter 7 of the plan addressing agriculture specifically. - the **LUS** also highlights that emissions from land uses such as agriculture will also need to fall significantly over the next 5 years, and cross refers back to the Climate Change Plan in this respect.
Economic impacts and sustainable development	**NPF4** sets out six spatial principles which future places are to be planned in line with, including those of: - **Just transition**, in terms of which the Scottish Government seeks to empower people to shape their places and ensure the transition to net zero is fair and inclusive; and **- Rural revitalisation**, in terms of which sustainable development is encouraged in rural areas. In addition, the national spatial strategy highlights the need for rapid transformation across all sectors of the economy to meet climate ambitions and: - **Policy 14** requires all developments to be sustainable in terms of making efficient use of resources, ensuring climate resilience, and integrating nature positive biodiversity solutions; and

	- **Policy 29** states that development proposals that contribute to the viability, sustainability and diversity of rural communities and local rural economy will be supported, including farms and other land use businesses, and production and processing facilities for local produce.
Biodiversity / habitat loss **And** **Making an effective use of land**	**Biodiversity** **Policy 3 of NPF4** requires all development proposals to contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity, and sets out requirements for different scales of development in this respect, with NatureScot having developed guidance on how these requirements can be met for local developments, and the Scottish Government having stated that they are also committed to developing guidance for major developments too, with research to explore options for developing a biodiversity metric or other tool, specifically for use in Scotland, having been commissioned. NPF4 also cross refers to **SBS**, one of the stated outcomes of which is that: "*Farmland practices will have resulted in a substantial regeneration in biodiversity, ecosystem and soil health and significantly reduced carbon emissions while sustaining high quality food production*." Related to this, SBS also states that areas under agriculture must be managed more sustainably, and sets out a commitment to: "*Put in place measures to ensure that farmland practices result in increased uptake of high diversity, nature-rich, high soil carbon,* ***low intensity farming methods*** *while sustaining high quality food production*" (emphasis added). **Effective use of land** The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 defines the purpose of planning as being to manage the development and use of land in the long-term public interest. **NPF4** also requires the efficient use of resources (including land) as highlighted above (**Policy 14),** and cross-refers to the **LUS's** aims in terms of making efficient use of our land by managing competing activities in a sustainable way.

Health	The origins of Town Planning are rooted in improving the health of people, and this continues to be reflected in the planning system in a number of ways… In **NPF4:** - The **national spatial strategy** seeks to support the planning and delivery of *"liveable places, where we can all live better, healthier lives"* and highlights, amongst other things, the importance of places which provide access to healthy food. **- Policy 14** also requires developments to deliver 'healthy' places, with the National Spatial Strategy highlighting; and **- Policy 23** states that development proposals which will have positive effects on health will be supported (including proposals for community food growing), while proposals which are likely to have a significant adverse impact on health will not be, with there being potential for a Health Impact Assessment to be required. In addition, **Good Food Nation Plans** are likely to be relevant in this context, and some **Local Development Plans** are introducing policies on health and wellbeing (see, for example, the emerging Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023, which will require all new developments to provide "*healthy environments, reduce environmental stresses, facilitate physical activity and promote physical and mental wellbeing*". And lastly, in terms of delivering the health benefits of local food growing, **Local Food Growing Strategies** are likely to be relevant in this context too.
Impacts on local communities and their character	The underlying purpose of **Policy 23 of NPF4** is to protect people and places from harm, while **Policy 14** requires all development proposals to be designed to improve the quality of the area within which they would be located, and **Policy 29** states that, in rural areas specifically, development proposals should be: *"…suitably scaled, sited and designed to be in keeping with the character of the area."* In addition, **LDP's** are likely to have local authority specific policies of relevance in this respect, with **LPPs** likely to be of relevance as well. And, in terms of opportunities for communities to be involved in decisions about land that may affect them, the principles of **the LRSS** include the need for there to be meaningful collaboration and community engagement in decisions about land.
Pollution	As noted above, the underlying purpose **Policy 23 of NPF** is to protect people and communities from environmental harm, including by stating that developments which give rise to unacceptable levels of air or noise pollution will not be allowed.

	This also needs to be read in the context of **Policy 4,** which states more generally that: *"Development proposals which by virtue of type, location or scale will have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment, will not be supported."* And that the "*precautionary principle will be applied in accordance with relevant legislation and Scottish Government guidance*".

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 development 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 planning applications that require a PPC permit. Better quality information at the planning application stage and within the impact assessment 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 Planning for the Planet website.

Register to join here

Calculations for the GHG emissions from intensive chickens, pigs and dairy cows
Chickens:
Each broiler chicken produces about 1.5kg edible meat and each kg meat causes 9.8kg CO2e
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 7500litres 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 x 12) x 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**