Permitting Decisions - Bespoke Permit

We have decided to grant the permit for Hubbard's Farm Poultry Unit operated by G.S.T. Limited.

The permit number is EPR/JP3228LQ.

We consider in reaching that decision we have taken into account all relevant considerations and legal requirements and that the permit will ensure that the appropriate level of environmental protection is provided.

The application is for operation of a new intensive farming poultry installation, comprising two poultry houses with capacity for 109,628 broiler places.

Purpose of this document

This decision document provides a record of the decision-making process. It

- highlights key issues in the determination
- summarises the decision making process in the decision considerations section to show how the main relevant factors have been taken into account
- shows how we have considered the consultation responses

Unless the decision document specifies otherwise, we have accepted the applicant's proposals.

Read the permitting decisions in conjunction with the environmental permit. The introductory note summarises what the permit covers.

Key issues of the decision

Intensive Rearing of Poultry or Pigs BAT Conclusions document

The Best Available Techniques (BAT) Reference document (BREF) for the Intensive Rearing of Poultry or Pigs (IRPP) was published on 21st February 2017. There is now a separate BAT Conclusions document which sets out the standards that permitted farms will have to meet.

Now the BAT Conclusions are published, all new installation farming permits issued after 21st February 2017 must be compliant in full from the first day of operation.

There are some additional requirements for permit holders. The BAT Conclusions include BAT-Associated Emission Levels (BAT AELs) for ammonia emissions, which will apply to the majority of permits, as well as BAT AELs for nitrogen and phosphorus excretion.

For some types of rearing practices, stricter standards apply to farms and housing permitted after the BAT Conclusions were published.

BAT Conclusions review

There are 34 BAT Conclusion measures in total within the BAT Conclusion document dated 21st February 2017.

The Applicant has confirmed their compliance with all BAT conditions for the new installation in their document reference 'Summary, technical standards & control measures for Application Bespoke EPR/JP3228LQ Hubbard's Farm Poultry Unit, Hubbard's Farm, Shalford Green, Braintree, CM7 5AZ', dated 01/12/2025, which has been referenced in Table S1.2 – Operating Techniques of the permit.

The following is a more specific review of the measures the Applicant has applied to ensure compliance with the above key BAT measures:

BAT 3 Nutritional management - Nitrogen excretion

The Applicant has confirmed it will demonstrate that the installation can achieve levels of nitrogen excretion below the required BAT AEL of 0.6kg N/animal place/year and will use BAT 3a technique reducing the crude protein content.

BAT 4 Nutritional management - Phosphorus excretion

The Applicant has confirmed it will demonstrate that the installation can achieve levels of phosphorus excretion below the required BAT AEL of 0.25kg

P_2O_5/animal place/year and will use BAT 4a technique reducing the crude protein content.

BAT 24 Monitoring of emissions and process parameters - Total nitrogen and phosphorus excretion

Table S3.3 of the permit concerning process monitoring requires the Operator to undertake relevant monitoring that complies with these BAT Conclusions.

This will be verified by means of using a mass balance calculation of nitrogen and phosphorus based on the feed intake, dietary content of crude protein and animal performance and reported annually.

BAT 25 Monitoring of emissions and process parameters – Ammonia emissions

Table S3.3 of the permit concerning process monitoring requires the Operator to undertake relevant monitoring that complies with these BAT Conclusions.

The Applicant has confirmed they will report the ammonia emissions to the Environment Agency annually by utilising estimation by using emission factors.

BAT 26 Monitoring of emissions and process parameters - Odour emissions

The approved odour management plan (OMP) includes the following details for on farm monitoring and continual improvement:

• The staff will perform a daily boundary walk to check the surrounding area for high levels of odour. Checks will also be performed on the surrounding area by persons who do not regularly work on the farm.

• Daily visual (and nasal) inspections of potentially odorous activities will be carried out.

• In the event of odour complaints being received the Operator will notify the Environment Agency and make a record of the complaint. The Operator will undertake the necessary odour contingency as required.

BAT 27 Monitoring of emissions and process parameters - Dust emissions

Table S3.3 of the permit concerning process monitoring requires the Operator to undertake relevant monitoring that complies with these BAT Conclusions.

The Applicant has confirmed they will report the dust emissions to the Environment Agency annually by utilising estimation by using emission factors.

BAT 32 Ammonia emissions from poultry houses - Broilers

The BAT AEL to be complied with is 0.08 kg NH_3/animal place/year. The Applicant will meet this as the emission factor for broilers is 0.024 kg NH_3/animal place/year.

The installation does not include an air abatement treatment facility; hence the standard emission factor complies with the BAT AEL.

Detailed assessment of specific BAT measures

Ammonia emission controls – BAT Conclusion 32

A BAT Associated Emission Level (AEL) provides us with a performance benchmark to determine whether an activity is BAT. The BAT Conclusions include a set of BAT AELs for ammonia emissions to air from animal housing for broilers.

All new bespoke applications issued after the 21st February 2017, including those where there is a mixture of old and new housing, will now need to meet the BAT AEL.

Industrial Emissions Directive (IED)

This permit implements the requirements of the European Union Directive on Industrial Emissions.

Groundwater and soil monitoring

As a result of the requirements of the Industrial Emissions Directive, all permits are now required to contain a condition relating to protection of soil, groundwater and groundwater monitoring. However, the Environment Agency's H5 Guidance states that it is only necessary for the Operator to take samples of soil or groundwater and measure levels of contamination where there is evidence that there is, or could be existing contamination and:

- The environmental risk assessment has identified that the same contaminants are a particular hazard; or
- The environmental risk assessment has identified that the same contaminants are a hazard and the risk assessment has identified a possible pathway to land or groundwater.

H5 Guidance further states that it is **not essential for the Operator** to take samples of soil or groundwater and measure levels of contamination where:

- The environmental risk assessment identifies no hazards to land or groundwater; or
- Where the environmental risk assessment identifies only limited hazards to land and groundwater and there is no reason to believe that there could be historic contamination by those substances that present the hazard; or
- Where the environmental risk assessment identifies hazards to land and groundwater but there is evidence that there is no historic contamination by those substances that pose the hazard.

The site condition report (SCR) for Hubbard's Farm Poultry Unit, dated 01/12/2025, demonstrates that there are no hazards or likely pathway to land or groundwater and no historic contamination on site that may present a hazard from the same contaminants. Therefore, on the basis of the risk assessment presented in the SCR, we accept that they have not provided base line reference data for the soil and groundwater at the site at this stage and although condition 3.1.3 is included in the permit no groundwater monitoring will be required.

Odour management

Intensive farming is by its nature a potentially odorous activity. This is recognised in our 'How to Comply with your Environmental Permit for Intensive Farming' EPR 6.09 guidance.

Condition 3.3 of the environmental permit reads as follows:

"Emissions from the activities shall be free from odour at levels likely to cause pollution outside the site, as perceived by an authorised officer of the Environment Agency, unless the Operator has used appropriate measures, including, but not limited to, those specified in any approved odour management plan, to prevent or where that is not practicable to minimise the odour."

Under section 3.3 of the guidance, an Odour Management Plan (OMP) is required to be approved as part of the permitting process if, as is the case here, sensitive receptors (sensitive receptors in this instance excludes properties associated with the farm) are within 400m of the installation boundary. It is appropriate to require an OMP when such sensitive receptors have been identified within 400m of the installation to prevent or, where that is not practicable, to minimise the risk of pollution from odour emissions.

The risk assessment for the installation provided with the application lists key potential risks of odour pollution beyond the installation boundary. These activities are as follows:

- Manufacture and selection of feed.
- Feed delivery and storage.

- Ventilation.
- Litter management.
- Poultry house clean out.
- Mobile macerator.
- Carcass storage and disposal.

Odour Management Plan Review

There are forty sensitive receptors within 400m of the installation boundary, the nearest sensitive receptor (the nearest point of their assumed property boundary) is approximately 0 metres to the south of the installation boundary, and approximately 14 metres from the nearest poultry house.

RFI response (24/04/2026) clarifies that receptors 27 (0m) and 28 (85m) within the Odour Management Plan are associated with the same premises but are not associated with the installation.

The sensitive receptors that have been considered under odour and noise, does not include the operator's property and other people associated with the farm operations as odour and noise are amenity issues.

The Operator has provided an OMP (submitted 24/04/2026) and this has been assessed against the requirements of 'How to Comply with your Environmental Permit for Intensive Farming' EPR 6.09 (version 2), Appendix 4 guidance 'Odour Management at Intensive Livestock Installations' and our Top Tips Guidance and Poultry Industry Good Practice Checklist (August 2013), as well as the site-specific circumstances at the Installation. We consider that the OMP is acceptable because it complies with the above guidance, with details of odour control measures, contingency measures and complaint procedures described below.

The OMP includes the following key measures to minimise odour and odour risks:

- The staff will perform a daily boundary walk to sniff test the surrounding area for high levels of odour and inspections of potentially odorous activities will be carried out. Checks will also be performed on the surrounding area by persons who do not regularly work on the farm.
- Feed specifications are prepared by the feed compounder's nutrition specialist. No milling or mixing feeds on site.
- Feed delivery systems are enclosed to minimise atmospheric dust. Any spillage of feed around the bin is immediately swept up. Checks of equipment are carried out at least once a day.
- Silos and feeding equipment protected from collision damage from reversing vehicles by careful siting relative to traffic flows, with kerbs or barriers as required. Equipment defects must be rectified immediately,

same day by farmworkers, operators' engineers or professional contractors.

- Ventilation is checked at least once per day and defects are rectified by farmworkers, operator's engineers or professional contractors and backed up by standby generator.
- Non-leaking nipple drinkers with drip cups installed to minimise spillage and keep litter dry. Farmworkers check drinker lines daily, adjusting drinking lines to optimum bird's eye level to minimise spillages and keep litter dry.
- Carcases removed from houses daily and stored in secure, non-leaking containers inside the carcase storage area. The containers are checked daily with weekly collections by a licenced contractor under the under the National Fallen Stock Scheme.
- Macerated eggs and dirty water from cleaning and disinfecting the macerator are stored in the secure, non-leaking containers inside the carcass storage area.
- Professional contractors will washout houses as soon as possible, normally within a day of destocking, not more than 3 days.
- No used litter will be stored onsite.
- Site is washed by specialist contractors. During periods of poultry house clean out, dirty water will be diverted to the underground dirty water storage tank and be exported offsite by a registered carrier for spreading on 3rd party land in accordance with manure management plans and the Code of Good Agricultural Practice.

It should also be noted that for existing farms, having consulted with the Local Authority and our local area compliance team, there are no known historical odour complaints at this site.

The OMP also provides a suitable procedure in the event that complaints are made to the Operator. The OMP is required to be reviewed at least every year (as committed to in the OMP) and/or after a complaint is received, and/or after any changes to operations at the installation, whichever is the sooner. The OMP includes contingency measures to minimise odour pollution during abnormal operations. A list of remedial measures is included in the contingency plan, including triggers for commencing and ceasing use of these measures.

The Environment Agency has reviewed the OMP and considers it complies with the requirements of our H4 Odour management guidance note. We agree with the scope and suitability of key measures, but this should not be taken as confirmation that the details of equipment specification design, operation and maintenance are suitable and sufficient. That remains the responsibility of the Operator.

Although there is the potential for odour pollution from the Installation, the Operator's compliance with its OMP and permit conditions will minimise the risk of odour pollution beyond the Installation boundary. The risk of odour pollution at

sensitive receptors beyond the Installation boundary is therefore not considered significant.

Conclusion

We have assessed the OMP and conclude that the Applicant has followed the guidance set out in EPR 6.09 Appendix 4 ‘Odour management at intensive livestock installations’. We are satisfied that all sources and receptors have been identified, and that the proposed mitigation measures will minimise the risk of odour pollution/nuisance.

Noise management

Intensive farming by its nature involves activities that have the potential to cause noise pollution. This is recognised in our ‘How to Comply with your Environmental Permit for Intensive Farming’ EPR 6.09 guidance.

Condition 3.4 of the permit reads as follows:

“Emissions from the activities shall be free from noise and vibration at levels likely to cause pollution outside the site, as perceived by an authorised officer of the Environment Agency, unless the Operator has used appropriate measures, including, but not limited to, those specified in any approved noise and vibration management plan, to prevent or where that is not practicable to minimise the noise and vibration”.

Under section 3.4 of the guidance, a Noise Management Plan (NMP) is required to be approved as part of the permitting process if, as is the case here, sensitive receptors (sensitive receptors in this instance excludes properties associated with the farm) are within 400m of the installation boundary. It is appropriate to require a NMP when such sensitive receptors have been identified within 400m of the installation to prevent or, where that is not practicable, to minimise the risk of pollution from noise emissions.

There are sensitive receptors within 400 metres of the installation boundary as stated under the ‘Odour’ section. The Operator has provided a NMP as part of the application supporting documentation, and further details are provided below.

The risk assessment for the installation provided within the NMP for the application lists key potential risks of noise pollution beyond the installation boundary. These activities are as follows:

- Large and small vehicles travelling to and from the farm.
- Feeding equipment and feed transfer.
- Ventilation fans.
- Vehicle movement on site – including delivery of feed, transporting birds, equipment used to clean houses, litter and dirty water removal.
- Mobile macerator.

- Personnel.
- Chickens – including catching and removal from site.
- Clean out operations.
- Alarm system and standby generator.
- Building work and repairs.

Noise Management Plan Review

The final NMP provided by applicant and assessed below was received as part of the application supporting documentation on 24/04/2026.

The NMP provides a suitable procedure in the event of complaints in relation to noise. The NMP is required to be reviewed at least every year (as committed to in the NMP), however the Operator has confirmed that it will be reviewed if a complaint is received, whichever is sooner. The NMP includes noise control measures and procedural measures.

We have included our standard noise and vibration condition, condition 3.4.1, in the Permit, which requires that emissions from the activities shall be free from noise and vibration at levels likely to cause pollution outside the site, as perceived by an authorised officer of the Environment Agency, unless the Operator has used appropriate measures, including, but not limited to, those specified in any approved NMP (which is captured through condition 2.3 and Table S1.2 of the Permit), to prevent or where that is not practicable to minimise the noise and vibration.

We are satisfied that the manner in which operations are carried out on the Installation will minimise the risk of noise pollution.

Conclusion

We have assessed the NMP for noise and conclude that the Applicant has followed the guidance set out in EPR 6.09 Appendix 5 ‘Noise management at intensive livestock Installations’. We are satisfied that all sources and receptors have been identified, and that the proposed mitigation measures will minimise the risk of noise pollution/nuisance.

Dust and Bioaerosols management

The use of Best Available Techniques and good practice will ensure minimisation of emissions. There are measures included within the permit (the ‘Fugitive Emissions’ conditions) to provide a level of protection. Condition 3.2.1 ‘Emissions of substances not controlled by an emission limit’ is included in the permit. This is used in conjunction with condition 3.2.2 which states that in the event of fugitive emissions causing pollution following commissioning of the installation, the Operator is required to undertake a review of site activities, provide an emissions management plan and to undertake any mitigation

recommended as part of that report, once agreed in writing with the Environment Agency.

In addition, guidance on our website concludes that Applicants need to produce and submit a dust and bioaerosol management plan beyond the requirement of the initial risk assessment, with their applications only if there are relevant receptors within 100 metres including the farmhouse or farm workers' houses. Details can be found via the link below:

www.gov.uk/guidance/intensive-farming-risk-assessment-for-your-environmental-permit#air-emissions-dust-and-bioaerosols.

As there are receptors within 100m of the installation, the Applicant was required to submit a dust and bioaerosol management plan in this format. The final dust and bioaerosol management plan provided by the applicant and assessed below was received on 01/12/2025.

There are three sensitive receptors within 100m of the installation boundary, the nearest sensitive receptor (the nearest point of their assumed property boundary) is approximately 0 metres to the south of the installation boundary, and approximately 14 metres from the nearest poultry house.

In the guidance mentioned above it states that particulate concentrations fall off rapidly with distance from the emitting source. This fact, together with the proposed good management of the installation (such as keeping areas clean from build-up of dust and other measures in place to reduce dust and the risk of spillages e.g. litter and feed management/delivery procedures) all reduce the potential for emissions impacting the nearest receptors. The Applicant has confirmed measures in their dust and bioaerosol management plan to reduce dust (which will inherently reduce bioaerosols) for the following potential risks:

- Feed type and delivery.
- Ventilation fans.
- Bedding materials.
- Bird activity.
- House cleaning operations.
- Litter management.

We are satisfied that the measures outlined in the application will minimise the potential for dust and bioaerosol emissions from the installation.

Mobile macerator

A mobile macerator is operated within the installation boundary for maceration of dead-in-shell and pipping eggs (not-hatched) and non-viable chicks. The macerator is contained inside a small, covered trailer. There are no point source emissions to air, water or land from operation of the macerator. Operation of the

macerator is limited to normal day time hours (07.00-23.00hrs) in the working week (Monday to Friday and Saturday morning but exclusive of public & bank holidays). The macerator arrives on site the day after egg hatching and is only in use for a maximum of 1 hour per day. The macerated material, plus a small volume of dirty water from cleaning and disinfecting the macerator, is stored in the secure, covered non-leaking carcass containers, which are kept locked, and removed from site weekly.

The mobile macerator is used for a limited period of time; however, the maceration process has the potential for environmental impact linked to odour pollution. It is also technically connected to the intensive farming scheduled activity through processing of rejected eggs and unviable chicks from the installation. In addition, in this specific case the capacity of the macerator unit is not insignificant at 112.8 t/day and hence theoretically above the Section 5.4 A(1) scheduled activity threshold for physico-chemical treatment of 50 t/day. However, as the operator has confirmed in the Technical Standards dated 01/12/2025 that the maximum time usage of the macerator is 1 hour per day and the actual maximum operational capacity is limited to 4.7 tonnes per day. This is controlled via the addition of the macerator as a directly associated activity with the above stated operational capacity limit in the revised Table S1.1 of the permit. Controls to minimise odour emissions resulting from operation of the macerator have been included in the OMP. The OMP plus operating techniques for the macerator have been included in Table S1.2 of the Permit.

Standby Generator

There is one standby generator with a net thermal rated input of 0.43MWth and it will not be tested more than 50 hours per year or operated (including testing) for more than 500 hours per year (averaged over 3 years) for emergency use only as a temporary power source if there is a mains power failure.

Ammonia

The Applicant has demonstrated that the housing will meet the relevant NH_3 BAT AEL.

There are no Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) or Ramsar sites within 5km of the installation. There is one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within 5km of the installation. There are nine Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and three Ancient Woodlands (AW) within 2km of the installation.

Ammonia assessment – SSSI

The following trigger thresholds have been applied for assessment of SSSIs:

- If the process contribution (PC) is below 20% of the relevant critical level (CLe) or critical load (CLo) then the farm can be permitted with no further assessment.
- Where this threshold is exceeded an assessment alone and in combination is required. An in-combination assessment will be completed to establish the combined PC for all existing farms identified within 5 km of the SSSI.

Initial screening using the ammonia screening tool version 4.6 (dated 01/04/2026) has indicated that emissions from Hubbard's Farm Poultry Unit will only have a potential impact on SSSIs with a precautionary CLe of 1 μg/m^3 if they are within 557 metres of the emission source.

Beyond 557m the PC is less than 0.2 μg/m^3 (i.e. less than 20% of the precautionary 1 μg/m^3 CLe) and therefore beyond this distance the PC is insignificant. In this case the SSSI is beyond this distance (see table below) and therefore screens out of any further assessment.

Where the precautionary level of 1 μg/m^3 is used and the PC is assessed to be less than 20%, the site automatically screens out as insignificant and no further assessment of CLo is necessary. In this case the 1 μg/m^3 level used has not been confirmed by Natural England, but it is precautionary. It is therefore possible to conclude no likely damage to this site.

Table 1 – SSSI Assessment

Name of SSSI	Distance from site (m)
Bovingdon Hall Woods	3,500

No further assessment is required.

Ammonia assessment – LWS and AW

The following trigger thresholds have been applied for the assessment of these sites:

- If the process contribution (PC) is below 100% of the relevant critical level (CLe) or critical load (CLo) then the farm can be permitted with no further assessment.

Initial screening using ammonia screening tool version 4.6 (dated 01/04/2026) has indicated that emissions from Hubbard's Farm Poultry Unit will only have a potential impact on the LWS and AW sites with a precautionary CLe of 1 μg/m^3 if they are within 250m of the emission source.

Beyond 250m the PC is less than 1 µg/m^3 and therefore beyond this distance the PC is insignificant. In this case all LWSs and AWs are beyond this distance (see table below) and therefore screen out of any further assessment.

Table 2 – LWS and AW Assessment

Site	Distance from site (m)
Shalford Park/Levelly Wood LWS	366
Reding Spring LWS	672
Pods Brook Complex LWS	1,070
Alder Car LWS	1,197
Hart Wood LWS	1,328
Ash Ground LWS	1,429
Beazley End LWS	1,584
Gret Codham Hall Wood LWS	1,996
Oxney Wood LWS	2,110*
Unknown name AW	366
Hart Wood AW	1,327
Unknown name AW	2,016*

* These sites are included at >2km because the screening is based on an approximate centre point of the emissions and includes a buffer distance calculated from this centre point to the furthest point of the boundary to ensure all other nature conservation sites within the threshold distance from the installation boundary have been included in the assessment.

No further assessment is required.

Decision considerations

Confidential information

A claim for commercial or industrial confidentiality has not been made.

Identifying confidential information

We have not identified information provided as part of the application that we consider to be confidential.

The decision was taken in accordance with our guidance on confidentiality.

Consultation

The consultation requirements were identified in accordance with the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations (2016) and our public participation statement.

The application was publicised on the GOV.UK website.

We consulted the following organisations:

- Local Authority – Environmental Health/Environmental Protection department.
- Local Authority – Director of Public Health.
- Health and Safety Executive.
- UK Health Security Agency.

The comments and our responses are summarised in the consultation responses section.

Operator

We are satisfied that the applicant (now the Operator) is the person who will have control over the operation of the facility after the grant of the permit. The decision was taken in accordance with our guidance on legal operator for environmental permits.

The regulated facility

We considered the extent and nature of the facility at the site in accordance with RGN2 ‘Understanding the meaning of regulated facility’.

The extent of the facility is defined in the site plan and in the permit. The activities are defined in table S1.1 of the permit.

The site

The Operator has provided plans which we consider to be satisfactory, showing the extent of the site facilities.

The plans show the location of the part of the installation to which this permit applies on that site.

The plan is included in the permit.

Site condition report

The Operator has provided a description of the condition of the site, which we consider is satisfactory. The decision was taken in accordance with our guidance on site condition reports and baseline reporting under the Industrial Emissions Directive.

Nature conservation, landscape, heritage and protected species and habitat designations

We have checked the location of the application to assess if it is within the screening distances, we consider relevant for impacts on nature conservation, landscape, heritage and protected species and habitat designations. The application is within our screening distances for these designations.

We have assessed the application and its potential to affect sites of nature conservation, landscape, heritage and protected species and habitat designations identified in the nature conservation screening report as part of the permitting process.

We consider that the application will not affect any site of nature conservation, landscape and heritage, and/or protected species or habitats identified.

See Ammonia section in the Key Issues above for more details.

We have not consulted Natural England.

The decision was taken in accordance with our guidance.

Environmental risk

We have reviewed the Operator's assessment of the environmental risk from the facility.

The Operator’s risk assessment is satisfactory.

General operating techniques

We have reviewed the techniques used by the Operator and compared these with the relevant guidance notes and we consider them to represent appropriate techniques for the facility.

The operating techniques that the applicant must use are specified in table S1.2 in the environmental permit.

The proposed techniques for priorities for control are in line with the benchmark levels contained in the Sector Guidance Note EPR6.09 and we consider them to represent appropriate techniques for the facility. The permit conditions ensure compliance with The Best Available Techniques (BAT) Reference document (BREF) for the Intensive Rearing of Poultry or Pigs (IRPP) published on 21st February 2017.

Odour management

We have reviewed the odour management plan in accordance with our guidance on odour management.

We consider that the odour management plan is satisfactory, and we approve this plan.

We have approved the odour management plan as we consider it to be appropriate measures based on information available to us at the current time. The applicant should not take our approval of this plan to mean that the measures in the plan are considered to cover every circumstance throughout the life of the permit.

The applicant should keep the plans under constant review and revise them annually or if necessary, sooner if there have been complaints arising from operations on site or if circumstances change. This is in accordance with our guidance ‘Control and monitor emissions for your environmental permit’.

The plan has been incorporated into the operating techniques table S1.2.

Noise management

We have reviewed the noise management plan in accordance with our guidance on noise assessment and control.

We consider that the noise management plan is satisfactory, and we approve this plan.

We have approved the noise management plan as we consider it to be appropriate measures based on information available to us at the current time. The applicant should not take our approval of this plan to mean that the

measures in the plan are considered to cover every circumstance throughout the life of the permit.

The applicant should keep the plans under constant review and revise them annually or if necessary, sooner if there have been complaints arising from operations on site or if circumstances change. This is in accordance with our guidance ‘Control and monitor emissions for your environmental permit’.

The plan has been incorporated into the operating techniques table S1.2.

Dust and bioaerosol management

We have reviewed the dust and bioaerosol management plan in accordance with our guidance on emissions management plans for dust.

We consider that the dust and bioaerosol management plan is satisfactory and we approve this plan.

We have approved the dust and bioaerosol management plan as we consider it to be appropriate measures based on information available to us at the current time. The applicant should not take our approval of this plan to mean that the measures in the plan are considered to cover every circumstance throughout the life of the permit.

The applicant should keep the plans under constant review and revise them annually or if necessary sooner if there have been complaints arising from operations on site or if circumstances change. This is in accordance with our guidance ‘Control and monitor emissions for your environmental permit.

The plan has been incorporated into the operating techniques S1.2.

Pre-operational conditions

Based on the information in the application, we consider that we need to include pre-operational conditions.

Pre-operational condition 1 in the permit: We have included a pre-operational condition in the permit to ensure that the proposed package water fogging system for the poultry houses will meet the requirements of EPR 6.09 Sector Guidance Note and Best Available Techniques (BAT) Reference Document for the Intensive Rearing of Poultry or Pigs 2017.

Pre-operational condition 2 in the permit: We have included a pre-operational condition in the permit to ensure that the proposed enlargement of an unlined existing pond (for storm conditions) which will act as a soakaway for the site drainage will meet the requirements of EPR 6.09 Sector Guidance Note and Best Available Techniques (BAT) Reference Document for the Intensive Rearing of Poultry or Pigs 2017.

Emission limits

We have decided that emission limits are required in the permit. BAT AELs have been added in line with the Intensive Farming sector BAT Conclusions document dated 21/02/2017. These limits are included in table S3.3 of the permit.

Monitoring

We have decided that monitoring should be carried out for the parameters listed in the permit, using the methods detailed and to the frequencies specified.

These monitoring requirements have been imposed in order to ensure compliance with Intensive Farming BAT Conclusions document dated 21/02/2017.

Reporting

We have specified reporting in the permit, using the methods detailed and to the frequencies specified.

We made these decisions in order to ensure compliance with the Intensive Farming sector BAT Conclusions document dated 21/02/2017.

Management system

We are not aware of any reason to consider that the Operator will not have the management system to enable it to comply with the permit conditions.

The decision was taken in accordance with the guidance on Operator competence and how to develop a management system for environmental permits.

Previous performance

We have checked our systems to ensure that all relevant convictions have been declared.

No relevant convictions were found.

Financial competence

There is no known reason to consider that the Operator will not be financially able to comply with the permit conditions.

Growth duty

We have considered our duty to have regard to the desirability of promoting economic growth set out in section 108(1) of the Deregulation Act 2015 and the guidance issued under section 110 of that Act in deciding whether to grant this permit variation.

Paragraph 1.3 of the guidance says:

“The primary role of regulators, in delivering regulation, is to achieve the regulatory outcomes for which they are responsible. For a number of regulators, these regulatory outcomes include an explicit reference to development or growth. The growth duty establishes economic growth as a factor that all specified regulators should have regard to, alongside the delivery of the protections set out in the relevant legislation.”

We have addressed the legislative requirements and environmental standards to be set for this operation in the body of the decision document above. The guidance is clear at paragraph 1.5 that the growth duty does not legitimise non-compliance and its purpose is not to achieve or pursue economic growth at the expense of necessary protections.

We consider the requirements and standards we have set in this permit are reasonable and necessary to avoid a risk of an unacceptable level of pollution. This also promotes growth amongst legitimate operators because the standards applied to the Operator are consistent across businesses in this sector and have been set to achieve the required legislative standards.

Consultation Responses

The following summarises the responses to consultation with other organisations, our notice on GOV.UK for the public and the way in which we have considered these in the determination process.

The consultation commenced on 07/01/2026 and ended on 04/02/2026.

Responses from organisations listed in the consultation section

Response received from: UK Health Security Agency on 27/01/2026.

Brief summary of issues raised: The main emissions of potential public health significance are emissions to air of bioaerosols, dust including particulate matter, and ammonia. These are all covered in detail within the permit application and suitable and sufficient control measures are suggested.

The proposed site does have sensitive residential receptors nearby on the farm itself within 100m and more within 250m, including one directly adjacent to the permit boundary. The applicant does not give much information about these dwellings and only lists sensitive receptors that “exclude a dwelling for persons in control of the installation”, all of which are at minimum 250m from the boundary. There is a primary school 400-600m NE of the site. Despite the proximity of receptors, the proposed control measures appear sufficient for the risk to public health to be low, assuming all identified measures and protocol are followed.

UKHSA have noted the following:

1. Applicant does not provide a specific Accident Management Plan. However, many of the relevant risks and control measures are covered within the environmental risk assessment. The regulator may wish to consider whether accidents have been suitably considered by the applicant.

2. Similarly, bioaerosols are covered in the “dust and bioaerosol management plan”. As sensitive receptors are present within 100m, the regulator may wish to consider if they are happy to accept this as a bioaerosol risk assessment or if they wish to request a specific document for bioaerosols.

Summary of actions taken:

1. A revised Odour Management Plan has been received. The closest sensitive receptors under 100m at 0m (separate farming business) and 85m (residential) are associated with the same premises but are associated with the installation. See key issues section for more details.

2. Accidents have been considered by the applicant in a summary of the Environmental Management System (EMS) and Environmental Risk Assessment (ERA). The Accident Management Plan will be requested and assessed during Area team compliance visits.

3. The Applicant has provided a combined dust and bioaerosol management plan as part of the supporting information for this application, in accordance with guidance. We have checked this management plan against our guidance, www.gov.uk/guidance/intensive-farming-risk-assessment-for-your-environmental-permit#air-emissions-dust-and-bioaerosols, and are satisfied that the measures proposed will minimise the potential for dust and bioaerosol emissions from the installation. Bioaerosol risks have also been considered by the applicant in the Environmental Risk Assessment (ERA).

Response received from: Braintree District Council (Local Authority)– Environmental Health/Environmental Protection department on 05/02/2026.

Brief summary of issues raised:

1. The last allegation of noise from Hubbard's Farm was received in 2024. This complaint was not investigated beyond informing the site in writing as no further complaints were received. The allegation was noise from the use of a generator. It is noted that there is no comment on the power generation at the site, so it is assumed to be via mains or a non-noise polluting means. Environmental Health would expect that any equipment is designed to minimise noise emissions and in view of the distance to the closest sensitive/ residential property from the installation then should be able to achieve through appropriate design and installation of noise producing equipment acceptable noise rating levels in accordance with BS4142 and with no low frequency tone or specific characteristics of the noise being noticeable at noise sensitive receptors.

2. There was a local report of manure self-combusting/ emitting smoke in the Shalford area in May 2025 to Environmental Health at Braintree District Council which was linked to Hubbard's Farm. Whilst it is noted that this incident was not within the red line boundary for this installation/application site then it would be expected that handling/ storage and disposal or reuse of manure waste from the site is responsibly controlled so as not to cause local smoke/odour nuisance.

Summary of actions taken:

1. The generator is located in an integral acoustic enclosure and usage/ testing limits have been specified Noise Management Plan (NMP) and Environmental Risk Assessment (ERA).

2. No used litter is stored is stored on site and is exported offsite in covered trailers for spreading on 3rd party land in accordance with the Code of Good Agricultural Practice and manure management plan for the receiving land or it is supplied as fuel to a local power station by a registered carrier as stated in the Odour Management Plan (OMP). Odour impacts have also been considered in the Environmental Risk Assessment (ERA).

Representations from community and other organisations

Response received from: Communities Against Factory Farming (CAFF) on 03/02/2026.

Brief summary of issues raised and actions taken:

1. **Requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):**

An EIA is required as part of any planning application. The applicant did not submit an EIA as part of the Environmental Permitting Regulations (EPR) application. We are satisfied we have sufficient information to determine the Application and have carried out an assessment of the environmental impact of the installation as part of the Permit determination.

2. **Twin-tracking of EPR Permit and Planning Permission:**

The decision whether to twin-track the applications is a matter for the Applicant. We have a legal duty to determine applications made to us under the EPR and we are satisfied that we have sufficient information to do so and to complete the determination.

3. **Material change of use under section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990:**

Scale, location and land use are matters for consideration during the planning process and do not form part of the Permit decision. Where planning permission is required the local planning authority is responsible for determining land use.

4. **Greenhouse gas assessment calculation required for EIA:**

As discussed above, an EIA is required as part of any planning application. A Greenhouse gas assessment is not required as part of the EPR permit application.

5. **Intensive poultry production represents an inefficient use of grain protein:**

This is not an issue under the Environment Agency's regulatory responsibility. It does not therefore fall within the scope of the Permit determination. The Environment Agency is responsible for ensuring that the activities at the

Installation do not have an unacceptable impact on the environment or human health.

6. **Used litter and dirty water offsite:**

No used litter is stored is stored on site and is exported offsite in covered trailers for spreading or it is supplied as fuel to a local power station by a registered carrier.

The land where used litter may be stored or spread does not form part of the installation and so used litter exported from the installation for storage and spreading outside the installation is outside the scope of our determination. The EPR scope of regulation is limited to preventing significant pollution from emissions from the installation. Emissions are substances released from the installation whilst something exported in a controlled manner for subsequent use elsewhere is not considered an emission. The latter includes manure and litter removed as part of poultry house cleanouts.

The installation boundary for permitted farms typically includes the livestock housing, any yard and ranging areas and associated infrastructure but does not routinely include wider adjacent land. Whilst on farm slurry and manure management, yard run off and drainage are regulated by the permit, the spreading of manures and slurry to land (and the associated potential for water quality impacts) is primarily regulated through separate regulatory regimes namely the Reduction and Prevention of Agricultural Diffuse Pollution (England) Regulations (Farming Rules for Water), and, in designated areas, the Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations.

The Applicant has confirmed that the receiver of the used litter will confirm it is spread to land in accordance with the Code of Good Agricultural Practice, or in accordance with the manure management plan for the receiving land.

7. **Concerns for the impact of the installation on surrounding sensitive receptors:**

<u>Odour</u>

Guidance on our website concludes that applicants need to produce and submit an odour management plan with their application if there are relevant receptors within 400 metres of their farm.

The applicant has submitted an odour management plan and environmental risk assessment detailing measures to prevent significant emissions from the site, in accordance with our technical guidance note for intensive farming and the BAT Conclusions document. These measures include the use of appropriate ventilation systems, appropriate housing design and management, containment of feedstuff and management of poultry litter. We are satisfied that these measures will mitigate emissions to prevent a significant impact from the site.

Furthermore, standard condition 3.3.1 concerning odour emissions has been included in the permit.

We are satisfied, following a review of the information provided by the Applicant and the conditions present within the Permit, that emissions from the Installation will not have a significant impact on the health of local residents.

Dust

Guidance on our website concludes that applicants need to produce and submit a dust management plan with their application if there are relevant receptors within 100 metres of their farm, including the farmhouse or farm worker's houses.

The applicant has submitted a bioaerosol management plan and environmental risk assessment detailing measures to prevent significant emissions from the site, in accordance with our technical guidance note for intensive farming and the BAT Conclusions document. These measures include the use of appropriate ventilation systems, appropriate housing design and management, type and containment of feedstuff and management of poultry litter.

We are satisfied that these measures will mitigate emissions to prevent a significant impact from the site. Furthermore, standard condition 3.2.1 concerning fugitive emissions has been included in the permit.

We are satisfied, following a review of the information provided by the Applicant and the conditions present within the Permit, that emissions from the Installation will not have a significant impact on the health of local residents.

Noise

Guidance on our website concludes that applicants need to produce and submit a noise management plan with their application if there are relevant receptors within 400 metres of their farm.

The applicant has submitted a noise management plan and environmental risk assessment detailing measures to prevent significant emissions from the site, in accordance with our technical guidance note for intensive farming and the BAT Conclusions document. These measures include the use of appropriate feeding equipment, ventilation systems, alarm systems and standby generator, management of vehicle movements to and from the site, scheduling activities within the working week (i.e. clean out operations, building work and repairs, etc.)

We are satisfied that these measures will mitigate emissions to prevent a significant impact from the site. Furthermore, standard condition 3.4.1 concerning noise emissions has been included in the permit.

We are satisfied, following a review of the information provided by the Applicant and the conditions present within the Permit, that emissions from the Installation will not have a significant impact on the health of local residents.

8. **Cumulative impacts of multiple intensive agricultural developments in one river catchment:**

Scale, location and land use are matters for consideration during the planning process and do not form part of the Permit decision. The density of farms within a given area is not normally a relevant consideration under the EPR unless our risk assessment process requires an in-combination ammonia assessment; in this circumstance this was not required as the ammonia impact screened out based on impacts from this installation alone, in accordance with our guidance. Where planning permission is required the local planning authority is responsible for determining land use.

9. **Impact on nearby habitat receptors:**

We have carried out an assessment of the impact from this proposal on nearby habitat sites from ammonia emissions. This has considered any Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Ramsar sites and Sites of Special Scientific Interest within 5km of the Installation boundary and any other nature conservation sites, including National Nature Reserves, Local Nature Reserves, Ancient Woodlands and Local Wildlife Sites, within 2km of the Installation boundary. Screening using the ammonia screening tool version 4.6, has concluded that all ammonia emissions from the site are insignificant. The key issues section of this document summarises our ammonia assessment.

10. **Animal welfare:**

Animal welfare is not within the regulatory responsibility of the Environment Agency. It does not form part of the Permit decision making process. The Environment Agency is responsible for ensuring that the activities at the Installation do not have an unacceptable impact on the environment or human health.

The principal regulator for animal health is the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), whose main purpose is to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.

Representations from individual members of the public

Thirty-three responses were received from individual members of the public. These raised many of the same issues as previously addressed. Only those issues additional to those already considered are listed below:

1. **Risk of zoonotic disease:**

The birds will be kept indoors at all times so therefore it is extremely unlikely that they will contract Avian flu. Effective biosecurity measures will also ensure that the likelihood of disease will be low. We are satisfied that the risk of pollution of the environment or harm to human health from the activities at the site are not likely to be significant. Our compliance team

will ensure all relevant precautions are actioned in the event of any cases of Avian flu.

2. **Assessment of impacts on groundwater and nearby watercourses.**
An assessment of the site drainage, including the risk to groundwater and surface water from potential pollutants from the Installation, has been undertaken and the Applicant's Site Condition Report, covering protection of land and ground water, has been reviewed. We are satisfied that the risk to ground and surface waters is low.

Roof water from poultry houses one and two is intercepted by French drains filled with stones located under the eaves of both houses and act as soakaways. Any overflow is conveyed in underground pipes into a lined attenuation basin which has an overflow into an unlined existing pond (proposed to enlarge for storm conditions) which will act as a soakaway without any outlet into a ditch or watercourse. Water draining from the yard (excluding periods of washout when water from the yard drains to the underground tanks) will be directed by a concrete apron and diverter valve into catchpits and underground pipes into the lined attenuation basin. Therefore, there is no discharge direct to groundwater or surface waters from the installation.

Water from the wash out of poultry houses (slurry) is channelled to underground collection tanks close to the houses to await export off site for spreading on land owned by third parties. The collection tanks are built to conform to specifications in EPR 6.09 'How to comply with your environmental permit for intensive farming', and specifically to meet the requirements of The Water Resources (Control of Pollution) (Silage, Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil) (England) Regulations 2010 (as amended 2013). Diverter bungs will be used during wash down periods to prevent the contamination of surface water systems and to divert the wash water to the dirty water tank. Clean drainage systems will not be contaminated.

Wash water applied to land must be spread in accordance with the Reduction and Prevention of Agricultural Diffuse Pollution (England) Regulations 2018 (Farming Rules for Water), and, in designated areas, the Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations 2015 which were further amended in 2016, a manure management plan (in accordance with the Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) rules) and Condition 2.3.5 of the Permit, which requires that all appropriate measures are used to prevent or where that is not practicable minimise pollution.

The Applicant has proposed appropriate measures to manage fugitive emissions (emissions not controlled by an emission limit). We are satisfied that these measures will mitigate emissions to prevent a significant impact from the site. These measures are listed in Table S1.2 of the Permit and the Operator is required to comply with them as stipulated in Condition 2.3.1 of the

Permit. Standard conditions 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 concerning fugitive emissions are also included in the permit.

We conclude that the measures in place will ensure that any contaminated water will be contained, and potentially lightly contaminated water has sufficient mitigation in place. Therefore, no pollution of groundwater or surface water should occur as a result of operations at the Installation.

3. **Requirement for a Climate Assessment:**
Assessment of a climate change risk assessment is outside the scope of the determination of the Application however the Operator will be required to complete one as part of ongoing compliance, which our compliance team will assess.

4. **Use of antibiotics.**
The use of antibiotics does not fall within the regulatory responsibility of the Environment Agency.

The Health and Safety Executive and Director of Public Health were also consulted but no responses were received.