

Permitting Decisions - Variation

We have decided to grant the variation for **Pontesford Poultry Farm** operated by **Yockleton Growers Limited**.

The variation number is **EPR/YP3621SE/V003**

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.

This variation authorises the following changes:

- The addition of a single biomass boiler of 0.86 MW thermal input capacity and a fuel capacity of 150 kgs/hour.
- Biomass boiler will be fuelled by Grade A recycled wood and virgin woodchip. Storage of Grade A recycled wood 25 tonnes.
- No changes to boiler place numbers or any other changes to the installation.

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
- explains why we have also made an Environment Agency initiated variation
- summarises the engagement carried out because this is a site of high public interest
- 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 and the variation notice.

Key issues of the decision

The only change linked to this variation is the addition of a single new biomass boiler.

As such there is no change to the following:

- BAT conclusions assessment
- Ammonia habitat impacts assessment
- Ground water and land protection assessment

Industrial Emissions Directive (IED)

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

Dust and Bioaerosols management

An updated dust and bioaerosol management plan has been required linked to the addition of a biomass boiler and associated new dust emission.

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 08/07/26.

There are two sensitive receptors within 100m of the installation boundary, the nearest sensitive receptor (the nearest point of their assumed property boundary) is approximately 5 metres to the north east of the installation boundary.

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 all the listed potential risks:

Conclusion

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

Biomass Boiler

The Applicant is varying their permit to include one biomass boiler with a net rated thermal input of 0.86 (MW).

The Environment Agency has assessed the pollution risks and has concluded that air emissions from small biomass boilers are not likely to pose a significant risk to the environment or human health providing certain conditions are met. Therefore, a quantitative assessment of air emissions will not be required for poultry sites where:

the fuel will be derived from virgin timber, miscanthus or straw, and;

the biomass boiler appliance and installation meets the technical criteria equivalent to the eligibility for the former Renewable Heat Incentive, and;

For poultry:

- the aggregate boiler net rated thermal input is less than or equal to 4 MWth, and no individual boiler has a net thermal input greater than 1 MWth, and;
- the stack height must be a minimum of 5 metres above the ground (where there are buildings within 25 metres the stack height must be greater than 1 metre above the roof level of buildings within 25 metres (including building housing boiler(s) if relevant) and;
- there are no sensitive receptors within 50 metres of the emission point(s).

This is in line with the Environment Agency's document "Air Quality and Modelling Unit C1127a Biomass firing boilers for intensive poultry rearing". An assessment has been undertaken to consider the proposed addition of the biomass boiler(s).

Our risk assessment has shown that the biomass boiler will meet the requirements of the criteria above and are, therefore, considered not likely to pose a significant risk to the environment or human health and no further assessment is required.

Habitats assessment

In accordance with the Environment Agency's Air Quality Technical Advisory Guidance 14 version 2, dated November 21, for combustion plants under 1 MW, a further habitats assessment is only required for European sites and Sites of Special Scientific Interest if within 1.5 km and for other nature conservation sites if within m. This proposal has only one relevant site within 1.5 m and this is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and no other nature conservation sites within 0.2 km so is considered acceptable and no further assessment is required.

The only relevant site within 1.5 km is Earl's Hill & Habberley Valley SSSI, which is 946 metres from the centre of the installation and approximately 1 km from the biomass boiler stack.

Earl's Hill & Habberley Valley SSSI specific assessment

The following further information relates to installation biomass boiler impact on this SSSI:

- Biomass boiler thermal input capacity is 0.86 MW lower than maximum 1 MW for the 1,5 km screening distance.
- Critical oxides of nitrogen emissions for this boiler are lower than standard 250 mg/Nm³ at 6 % O₂ for this assessment. The oxides of nitrogen emission concentration when corrected to standard 6 % O₂ is approximately 150 mg/Nm³ considerably lower than standard emission used to create screening distance.
- The SSSI is to the south of the installation and not in the standard north easterly wind direction, further minimising impacts from boiler on this SSSI if dispersion modelling was carried out.

Conclusion

Overall, we are satisfied that the emissions from this boiler will not lead to adverse harm on the relevant SSSI This is based on our experience of similar size biomass boiler assessments and from the more specific data above.

No further assessment is required.

Grade A Wood Burning

The Operator has applied to use grade A recycled waste wood as fuel for one biomass boiler with a net rated thermal input of **0.86** Megawatts (MW). Where virgin and waste wood are mixed the fuel is all considered a waste.

The biomass boilers are to be fed by grade A wood only or a mixture of Grade A wood and virgin wood.

Grade A wood definition:

“Grade A waste wood” means visibly ‘clean’ recycled waste wood mainly originating from packaging waste, pallets, packing cases and process off-cuts from the manufacture of untreated wood products (as defined in BSI PAS 111: 2012).

The total capacity of the installation’s biomass boilers using Grade A wood is **150** kgs/hour.

As the activity does not meet the criteria of a U4 waste exemption, it will fall under a directly associated activity or section 5.1 B) (a) (v) of the Environmental Permitting Regulations - ‘The incineration in a small waste incineration plant with an aggregated capacity of 50kgs or more per hour of the following waste – wood waste with the exception of waste which may contain halogenated organic compounds or heavy metals as a result of treatment with wood preservatives or coatings’.

A site specific description of waste source and procedure have been reviewed and accepted as satisfactory to ensure that only grade A waste wood will be accepted.

The Operator will only be permitted to accept this waste type. Table S2.2 of the permit includes relevant waste wood and descriptions. We are satisfied that the waste wood is from a manufacturing source and that it will not be contaminated.

Decision considerations

Confidential information

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

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

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:

- Health and Safety Executive
- Shropshire Local Council Environmental Health Department
- UK HSA.
- Shropshire Department of Public Health

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

The regulated facility

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

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

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.

There are no changes leading to increased ammonia impacts from this variation.

The combustion plant risk assessment and conclusion is detailed within the biomass boiler section of this decision document.

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.

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.

Raw materials

We have specified limits and controls on the use of raw materials and fuels.

Waste types

We have specified the permitted waste types, descriptions and quantities, which can be accepted at the regulated facility.

We are satisfied that the Operator can accept these wastes for the following reasons:

- they are suitable for the proposed activities
- the proposed infrastructure is appropriate; and
- the environmental risk assessment is acceptable.

Waste codes are included as listed in permit table S2.2.

Emission limits

No emission limits have been added, amended or deleted as a result of this variation.

Monitoring

No new monitoring requirements linked to this variation.

Reporting

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

We have not added reporting requirements for this permit.

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.

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 03/08/26 and ended on 01/10/26

Responses from organisations listed in the consultation section

Response received from : **UKHSA (dated 26/08/26)**

Brief summary of issues raised:

Concerns raised of adequate fire risk management controls in place

Summary of actions taken:

The operator has provided a biomass management and accident plan document which details specific operating procedures and alarms/sensors within the biomass boiler room to minimise the risk of fires.

These include but are not limited to the following:

- Plant room fitted with smoke detectors and temperature sensors connected to alarm system. Flash back arrester fitted to boilers delivery auger preventing fire travelling to silos.
- Temperature recording of above 50 degrees Celsius will trigger the alarm system warning staff of a potential risk.
- Fire extinguishers will be available within the boiler area.

We are satisfied that adequate controls are in place to minimise the risk of fire on this installation linked to biomass storage and biomass boiler operation.

There were no other responses from the statutory consultants and no responses from the public.