Non-Technical Summary

The current EA permit includes three separate livestock units: Barn Farm broilers, Poplar Farm broilers and Barn Farm pigs. A decision was reached in late 2021 to cease pig production and it is anticipated that the last pigs will leave the site in May 2022. There are no proposed changes to the size or operation of Poplar Farm.

The closure of the pig unit has, to date, followed the Site Closure Plan with houses and storage facilities empties and cleaned as each becomes vacant.

It is proposed to construct an additional broiler house on part of the site occupied by the pig unit, bringing the total number of houses to six with a nominal total number of bird places of 289,000.

The operation of the enlarged broiler farm would not change. Prior to the arrival of the day-old chicks, the concrete floors in each house are covered with wood shavings to a depth of 20mm and the birds are warmed using LPG-fuelled brooders. As the birds grow, the ventilation rate increases and the house temperature is gradually reduced until the brooders can be switched off.

Feed is purchased from a feed mill under common ownership and it is stored on site in fully-enclosed bins. Diets are formulated according to the birds’ nutritional requirements and the stage of growth. Protein and phosphorus levels are reduced over the growing period and an enzyme is incorporated into the formulation to increase utilization of nutrients (carbohydrates, proteins and phytase phosphorus). Water is provided via nipple drinkers which are designed to minimise spillages. This, together with good environmental control in the houses helps to maintain good litter condition and hence reduce ammonia and odours. Water use in each house is monitored daily. Low energy lighting systems are used throughout the site.

Birds which die during the production cycle are removed from houses each day and the numbers are recorded. The carcasses are held in covered, vermin-proof bins prior to incineration on site, using a small (<50kg/hour) incinerator which has been approved by the State Veterinary Service.

At the end of the growing period, all birds are removed from the houses and the used litter is taken away from the site in covered vehicles. The litter is spread onto local, separately owned agricultural land. The empty houses are washed and disinfected ready for the next crop. The wash water drains to one of two lagoons subsequently the contents are spread onto neighbouring land. These measures are intended to reduce the production and emission of ammonia, dust and odours and to prevent liquid washings escaping to the environment. This in turn should reduce the environmental impact of the farming activities.’