ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT V2

ERECTION OF 6 NO. POULTRY HOUSES AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE AT GULHAM FIELDS FARM, GULHAM ROAD, NORTH OWERSBY, LN7 6JF

MERCER FARMING LTD

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CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Environmental Statement has been commissioned by Mercer Farming Ltd to accompany a planning application for the erection of 6 No. poultry houses with associated infrastructure at Gulham Fields Farm, Gulham Road, North Owersby, LN7 6JF.

1.2 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 provide for the submission of an Environmental Statement for certain types of development. The regulations prescribe the types of development for which EIA is mandatory (Schedule 1 Development). Regulation 17a provides for mandatory EIA with all proposals which exceed 85,000 birds.

1.3 This report has been prepared by Ian Pick. Ian Pick is a specialist agricultural and rural planning consultant. He holds a Bachelor of Science with Honours Degree in Rural Enterprise and Land Management and is a Professional Member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, being qualified in the Rural Practice Division of the Institution.

1.4 Ian Pick has 27 years' experience specialising in agricultural and rural planning whilst employed by MAFF, ADAS, Acorus, Ian Pick Associates Limited and most recently Harrison Pick Ltd.

1.5 Copies of this Environmental Statement are available from Ian Pick Associates Ltd for the sum of £50 for a paper copy, and £10 for a CD copy.

CHAPTER 2.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Regulatory Context

2.1 The requirements of Environmental Impact Assessment are provided within the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. These are referred to as the EIA regulations within this document. The EIA regulations require that any development which is listed in Schedule 1 be subject to EIA.

2.2 The proposed development falls within the definition of Section 17 of Schedule 1, 'Installations for the intensive rearing of poultry or pigs' as it exceeds the threshold of 85,000 broilers as defined in Section 17 part (a).

Screening

2.3 The process of determination whether a proposed development requires an EIA is called 'screening'. The EIA Regulations permit for a developer to request a screening opinion from the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to determine whether the EIA process should be followed. In this instance, EIA is mandatory under Schedule 1 of the 2017 EIA regulations and therefore a screening opinion was not required.

Scoping

2.4 The development proposal seeks consent for the erection of 6 No. poultry houses with associated infrastructure at Gulham Fields Farm, Gulham Road, North Owersby, LN7 6JF.

2.5 This Environmental Impact Assessment provides the following scope of assessment.

- Landscape and Visual Impacts Associated with the new development.
- Highways and Transportation Impacts
- Ecological Impacts & Ammonia Deposition associated with the new development.
- Manure Management Strategy

Subjects Scoped Out

Amenity Impacts

2.6 Amenity impacts, including noise and odour, have been scoped out of detailed assessment within this Environmental Statement due to the remote, rural location of the application site and the significant distance to the nearest sensitive receptors.

2.7 The proposed poultry unit is sited within land forming part of Gulham Fields Farm, in a location that benefits from substantial physical separation from residential properties. There are no dwellings within 400 metres of the proposed development. The nearest cluster of dwellings is located at North Gulham, approximately 700 metres to the east, with Hooks Farmhouse situated approximately 730 metres to the south. The settlements of Thornton le Moor and North Owersby lie approximately 1.8km and 2.6km from the site respectively. This level of separation significantly exceeds the 400-metre distance advocated by the Environment Agency as a threshold for amenity protection from intensive farming operations.

2.8 Furthermore, the proposed development will be subject to control under the Environmental Permitting regime, which specifically governs emissions to air (including odour and dust), and noise associated with agricultural processes. In accordance with Paragraph 201 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the planning process should focus on whether the proposal is an acceptable use of land, rather than duplicating the remit of the pollution control authorities. The NPPF clearly states that planning decisions should assume that the separate permitting regimes will operate effectively and that such matters should not be revisited through the planning system once appropriately regulated.

2.9 Given the significant separation distances, the rural context, and the regulatory control afforded by the Environmental Permitting regime, potential amenity impacts from noise and odour are not anticipated to give rise to unacceptable effects. For these reasons, amenity impacts have been scoped out of further assessment in this Environmental Statement.

Assessment and Reporting Methodology

2.10 Following identification of potential environmental effects through the EIA scoping process, technical assessments were carried out in order to predict potential effects associated with the development and where necessary proposed measures to mitigate the effects. These assessments are contained within the Environmental Statement.

The Environmental Statement

2.11 The Environmental Statement has been prepared to accompany an application for planning permission for the erection of 6 No. poultry houses with associated infrastructure on land at Gulham Fields Farm (OS Grid Reference: X503270, Y395420). The application has been submitted to West Lindsey District Council under the terms of the Town and County Planning Act 1990.

2.12 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, Schedule 4, requires that an Environmental Statement should include at least the following information:

- A description of the development including:
    - A description of the location of the development
    - A description of the main characteristics of the whole development and the land use requirements during the construction and operational phases.
    - A description of the main characteristics of the operational phase of the development (in particular any production process)
    - An estimate by type and quantity, of expected residues and emissions.
- A description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the developer which are relevant to the proposed project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reason for selecting the chosen option.
- A description of the current state of the environment (baseline scenario)
- A description of the factors likely to be significantly affected by the development.
- A description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment resulting from
    - The construction and existence of the development
    - The use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity.
    - The emission of pollutants, noise, vibration, light, heat and radiation, the creation of nuisances, and the disposal and recovery of waste.
    - The risks to human health, cultural heritage or the environment
    - The accumulation of effects with other existing and / or approved projects.
    - The impact of the project on the climate and and vulnerability of the project to climate change
    - The technologies and substances used
- A description of the forecasting methods or evidence used to identify and assess the significant effects on the environment including any difficulties encountered compiling the required information.
- A description of the measures envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any identified significant adverse effects on the environment. That description should explain the extent to which significant adverse effects on the environment are avoided, prevented, reduced or offset, and should cover both the construction and operational phases.
- A description of the expected significant adverse effects of the development on the environment deriving from the vulnerability of the development to risks of major accidents and / or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned. Where appropriate, this description should include measures envisaged to prevent or mitigate the significant adverse effects of such events on the environment and details of the preparedness for and proposed response to such emergencies.
- A non-technical summary of the above.

Contributors to the Environmental Statement

2.13 The team of consultants involved in the EIA are listed in table 2.1 below. Each was selected for their technical services and expertise in their respective fields.

Table 2.1

Chapter	**Consultants**
1. Introduction	Harrison Pick Ltd
2. EIA Process	Harrison Pick Ltd
3. Description of Development	Harrison Pick Ltd
4. Choice of Location	Harrison Pick Ltd
5. Planning Policy Context	Harrison Pick Ltd
6. Potential Environmental Effects	Harrison Pick Ltd
7. Landscape and Visual Impacts	Terrain Landscape Consultants
8. Highways and Transportation Impacts	DTA Transportation
9. Ecology and Ammonia Deposition	Brown and Co Harrison Pick Ltd
10. Manure Management	Harrison Pick Ltd
Non-Technical Summary	Harrison Pick Ltd

CHAPTER 3.

3. DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

Background Information

3.1 The applicants, Mercer Farming Ltd operate an agricultural business which extends to 700 acres agricultural land which is used for arable cropping at Gulham Fields Farm. The business also operates an existing poultry unit which extends to 8 poultry houses and accommodates up to 320,000 birds.

3.2 The applicants propose to expand their existing business through the development of a new poultry unit on a parcel of arable land located 1km to the northwest of the existing poultry unit at Gulham Fields Farm.

Project Description

3.3 The applicants have submitted a planning application to West Lindsey District Council for the erection of 6 No. poultry houses with associated infrastructure at land forming part of Gulham Fields Farm. The detailed elements of the proposed development are shown in the table below. The location of the development is shown on the location plan at **Appendix 1**.

Table 3.1

Element	Dimensions
6 No. Poultry Houses	110m x 24.69m with an eaves height of 3m and a ridge height of 6.32m.
3 No link Control Rooms	Linking each pair of poultry sheds extending to 189m2.
9 No. Feed Bins	3.5m diameter, 8.6m height.
Concrete Apron	4325 sq.m
Dirty Water Tanks	2 No. 20,000 litre dirty water tanks (underground)
Biomass Boiler House	42m x 16.7m with an eaves height of 6.2m and a ridge height of 7.85m.
Car Parking	Car Parking for 3 cars
Gas Tanks (1)	5 No. Gas Tanks
Water Tanks	2 No Circular water tanks with a diameter of 6.98m and a height of 5.345m.
Pump House and Store	14.4m x 4m with an eaves height of 2.6m and a ridge height of 3.152m.
Gate House	9.03m x 7m with an eaves height of 2.591m x 3.215m.
Backup Generator	9.5m x 4m with an eaves height of 2.4m and a ridge height of 2.952m
Sub Station	3.5m x 3m with an eaves height of 2.4m and a ridge height of 2.796m.
Drainage Attenuation Pond	1905 m3 of water storage.

3.4 The proposed development involves the erection of 6 No. poultry houses, together with associated infrastructure, as described in Table 3.1 above. The poultry buildings are to be used for the rearing of broilers from day old chicks through to finished table weight, with the additional infrastructure required, to facilitate the proposed use. Each poultry house will accommodate 40,000 birds. Following the development, the whole site will have a capacity of 240,000 birds.

3.5 The proposed six poultry houses are identical and will have pan feeders, non drip nipple drinkers and indirect heating provided from the proposed biomass boiler (*the site will be fitted with an emergency backup LPG gas heating system for welfare reasons*). Ventilation within the buildings will be undertaken through high-speed roof mounted fans, with gable fans for emergencies. The ventilation, heating and feeding systems are all fully automated and controlled by a computer system located within the control rooms which are attached to the north elevations of the poultry buildings. The systems are alarmed for high and low temperature, feeding system failure and power failure. The alarm system will be linked to an 'auto dial' computer system which alerts personnel via mobile phone to any system failures. The proposed poultry unit will produce standard birds, based on a 48-day growing cycle, including 10 days at the end of each cycle for cleanout and preparation of the buildings for the incoming flock. The unit will operate with 7.6 flocks per annum.

3.6 The chicks are placed within the building as day olds and reared within the building for 38 days, following which they are manually caught and transported live to the processers. During the growing cycle temperature is controlled within the buildings. The buildings are pre-warmed to a temperature of 32ºC on day 1 of the cycle reducing to 18ºC over the growing cycle. The temperature is controlled by the heating and the ventilation systems. The development will operate on an all-in all-out basis, with all six buildings stocked and de stocked at the same time.

3.7 At the end of each flock cycle, the buildings are cleaned out and the manure removed using agricultural loaders and will be loaded into sheeted trailers and removed from the site for disposal via biomass power stations. Following manure removal, the buildings will be washed out with high pressure hoses and prepared for the incoming flock. The inside of the poultry buildings is drained to sealed dirty water tanks which will be emptied following each cleanout of the building by vacuum tanker for disposal via a licensed treatment plant.

External Lighting

3.8 The development does not require 24-hour external lighting. There are three days over each flock cycle, being days 30 and days 37 and 38 when night-time catching operations will be undertaken and lighting on the site will be required in the form of directional flood lighting above the catching doors. Outside of

the catching periods, 24-hour lighting is not required. Motion sensor trigger lighting will be provided for any staff needing to visit the site during hours of darkness.

Mitigation within the Project Design

3.9 Mitigation is inherent within the project design. The proposal is for the development of a poultry unit and requires an Environmental Permit in order to operate which is issued by the Environment Agency. The requirements of the EP insist on the site being designed to Best Available Techniques (BAT). The proposed buildings are also required by the Environmental Permit to be sealed and drained into a SSAFO certified dirty water containment system which essentially removes any potential for contaminated water escaping from the site. The concrete apron to the north of the poultry buildings must be fitted with a diverter valve (required by EP) to ensure that during periods where the apron can become contaminated (during cleanout), all contaminated water can be diverted to the sealed dirty water containment system.

3.10 A Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) is incorporated into the design in the form of an attenuation pond.

Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Legislative Context and Legal Judgement

3.11 Under Schedule 4, Paragraph 5(f) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, an Environmental Statement must include a description of the likely significant effects of the development on the climate, and the vulnerability of the development to climate change.

3.12 The recent Court of Appeal judgment in *R (Finch) v Surrey County Council* [2024] EWCA Civ 24 clarified that indirect GHG emissions that are both inevitable and quantifiable must be assessed within an Environmental Statement where relevant. The decision emphasises that environmental assessment must include a reasoned understanding of the downstream impacts of a proposed development where those impacts are a foreseeable consequence of the project.

3.13 In response to this, and to ensure a legally sound and transparent planning decision, this section expands on the sources, nature, and treatment of both direct and indirect GHG emissions associated with the operation of the proposed poultry unit.

Overview of Emissions from Poultry Operations

3.14 UK agriculture contributes approximately 45.6 million tonnes CO_2 equivalent ($MtCO_2e$) per year, which represents around 10% of total UK GHG emissions.

However, emissions from agriculture differ significantly in composition compared to other sectors:

- Methane (CH_4) – ~50%
- Nitrous oxide (N_2O) – ~40%
- Carbon dioxide (CO_2) – ~10%

3.15 In poultry systems specifically:

- Methane emissions arise primarily from manure storage, rather than from digestion (unlike ruminants).
- Nitrous oxide emissions are associated with manure breakdown, especially when stored or land-spread.
- CO_2 emissions are mainly energy-related (e.g. ventilation, heating, transport).

3.16 Compared to ruminant livestock (e.g. beef and sheep), poultry meat has significantly lower GHG emissions per kilogram of output. Studies indicate:

- Poultry production produces ~1.7–2.0 kg CO_2e/kg meat,
- Pork ~4.6 kg CO_2e/kg,
- Beef ~24 kg CO_2e/kg.

The relatively low feed conversion ratio and limited enteric fermentation contribute to this reduced footprint.

Direct Emissions from the Proposed Development

3.17 Direct emissions are those associated with the day-to-day operation of the poultry facility. These include:

- CO_2 from energy use: electricity and fuel for heating, ventilation, lighting, and machinery.
- Methane (CH_4): The site does not store manure, and manure is removed off-site at the end of each flock cycle. Methane emissions from bird digestion are negligible and not considered a significant emission source. The absence of on-site storage eliminates the primary source of methane associated with poultry operations.
- Nitrous oxide (N_2O): This is typically produced during manure storage and decomposition. Given that no storage or field spreading occurs on site, N_2O emissions at the site are minimal.

Indirect Emissions and Fate of Manure (Finch Consideration)

3.18 In light of the *Finch* judgment, it is important to consider indirect emissions—i.e., those resulting downstream from the development where they are inevitable and foreseeable.

3.19 The key indirect emission source here is the combustion of manure at Thetford Power Station, to which 100% of the manure will be sent. The facility is a 35.8 MW biomass plant permitted to process poultry litter under Permit No. EPR/PP3235LP.

3.20 At Thetford:

- The poultry litter is combusted in a controlled environment.
- Emissions from this process include CO_2, NOx, and particulates, all of which are regulated under the Environmental Permit.
- This use of poultry litter displaces fossil fuels and contributes to renewable energy targets, offering a net carbon benefit when compared to fossil fuel-based electricity generation or manure land-spreading.

3.21 Importantly:

- No manure is spread on agricultural land, meaning there are no indirect N_2O or NH_3 emissions from decomposition or leaching.
- No methane is emitted from off-site storage, as storage is not part of the manure chain.

3.22 While it is not feasible or proportionate to precisely quantify the GHG emissions associated with combustion of the site's poultry litter at Thetford, the process is:

- Inevitable (as it is the established permanent route for all manure),
- Heavily regulated,
- And considered preferable from a climate and environmental perspective to alternatives such as field spreading, or untreated storage.

Climate Adaptation and Drainage Design

3.23 The development has incorporated climate adaptation measures into its design. In particular:

- The sustainable drainage system (SuDS) has been designed to account for future climate variability, including higher rainfall intensities.
- Heat exchanger technology will increase energy efficiency and reduce heating demand.

3.24 The proposed development will inevitably generate some level of GHG emissions, particularly from on-site energy use. However, these are mitigated by:

- Adoption of higher welfare standards,
- Efficient infrastructure (heat exchangers),
- Absence of manure storage and land-spreading,
- Use of manure for renewable energy generation at a licensed, regulated facility.

3.25 In line with *Finch*, all reasonably foreseeable and inevitable indirect emissions have been described. However, precise quantification of emissions is not possible without significant speculative modelling and is not proportionate to the scale or significance of emissions anticipated. On the evidence available, the proposed development is considered to have no significant adverse effects on climate and may result in net climate benefits when compared to other livestock systems and less sustainable waste disposal options.

Construction Phase

3.26 The construction phase of the proposed development will extend to approximately 30 weeks. This phase involves the following elements.

- Stripping of the topsoil and levelling of the subsoil to create a level development area using a tracked dozer.
- Importation of stone, levelling and compacting to create a sub-base.
- Preparation of concrete foundation pads for steelwork
- Erection of steelwork and cladding
- Concreting of the building floors and concrete aprons.
- Fitting of the buildings and installation of equipment.

3.27 The construction materials will be delivered into the site using HGV vehicles. Stone will be delivered using 8-wheel rigid quarry lorries; Concrete using 6-wheel rigid ready mix concrete lorries; and steel framework and sheeting using articulated lorries with flatbed trailers.

3.28 The proposal is a permanent development, and the estimated design life of the buildings is in excess of 50 years.

Characteristics and Production Processes

3.29 The use of the proposed buildings is for the rearing of day-old broiler chickens through to finished table weight.

Expected Residues and Emissions

3.30 The proposed broiler farm requires a permit under the Environment Agencies Environmental Permitting regime.

3.31 Expected residues and emissions from the site are limited to:

- Airborne emissions in the form of odour, ammonia and nitrogen
- Noise emission from mechanical plant and transport.
- Production of wastes in the form of poultry manure and dirty water

Forecasting Methods

3.32 The forecasting methods used within this assessment are detailed within the individual chapters and assessments.

- Landscape and Visual Impacts are assessed based on GLVIA3.
- Highways and Transportation Impacts are assessed based on guidance contained within the NPPF 2024, particularly paragraphs 115 to 118.
- Ecological Impacts are assessed following the methodology contained in the Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey (JNCC, 2010) and the current guidance on survey methods from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2017).

- Ammonia Modelling has been completed using SCAIL (Simple Calculation of Atmospheric Impact Limits).
- Manure Management the project in the light of the legal cases, particularly R (Squire) v Shropshire Council [2019] & EWCA Civ 888 & R (Caffyn) v Shropshire Council [2025] EWHC 1497 (Admin).

Environmental Assessment Level Methodology

3.23 The potential environmental effects of the proposed development have been assessed in accordance with the significance criteria set out below. The assessment of significance presented within each topic chapter of this Environmental Statement is supported by detailed technical assessments, provided in the corresponding Appendices. Each environmental effect has been categorised based on its scale, geographic extent, and the sensitivity of the affected receptors. The significance of each effect has been evaluated using the following qualitative levels:

Table 3.2

Level	**Definition**
None	*No discernible environmental effect beyond those already occurring under the existing agricultural regime.*
Low	*A minor, localised effect that does not adversely affect environmental features or receptors. Effects are limited in scale or distance, and do not compromise existing land uses.*
Medium	*A moderate effect that results in some impact on environmental features or receptors, but not to a degree considered significant under applicable planning or environmental regulations.*
High	*A significant environmental effect. This may require mitigation or result in notable changes to environmental quality or land use.*
Positive	*A beneficial effect that enhances environmental quality or contributes positively to existing environmental conditions.*

3.23 This methodology has been applied consistently across all topic areas to ensure a robust and transparent evaluation of potential environmental impacts.

CHAPTER 4.

4. CHOICE OF LOCATION / ALTERNATIVE SITES

4.1 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 require an Environmental Statement to cover alternatives **studied** by the applicants.

4.2 In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, the applicant has considered the potential for alternative locations during the early stages of the site selection process. The proposed site was chosen primarily to maximise the separation distance from neighbouring residential properties and to protect residential amenity. Within the applicant's landholding, the selected location offers the greatest achievable buffer—approximately 700 metres from the nearest cluster of dwellings at North Gulham and around 730 metres from Hooks Farmhouse. Additionally, the site benefits from substantial natural screening provided by existing woodlands and vegetation, further reducing potential visual and acoustic impacts. Given these significant advantages, the selected location was identified early on as the most appropriate within the landholding, and no other sites were considered to offer comparable benefits. As such, alternative locations were not pursued in detail.

CHAPTER 5.

5. PLANNING AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

Introduction

5.1 This chapter identifies planning policy relevant to the proposed development and the application site, together with an assessment of the development proposal against the planning policy and guidance.

5.2 The proposed development has been prepared having regard to national and local policy and guidance.

National Planning Policy Framework

5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework confirms that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF states "Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

a) **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) **an environmental objective**–to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

5.4 Paragraph 85 set the Governments position on economic growth, as detailed below:

Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The

approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.

5.5 Paragraph 88 provides support for economic growth in rural areas, as detailed below:

84. Planning policies and decisions should enable:

a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;

b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;

5.6 Paragraph 201 refers to developments where a separate Environmental Permit is required in terms of the operation of the site.

201. The focus of planning policies and decisions should be on whether proposed development is an acceptable use of land, rather than the control of processes or emissions (where these are subject to separate pollution control regimes). Planning decisions should assume that these regimes will operate effectively. Equally, where a planning decision has been made on a particular development, the planning issues should not be revisited through the permitting regimes operated by pollution control authorities.

Local Planning Policy – Central Lincolnshire Local Plan

5.7 Policy S5 protects the rural character of the countryside and seeks to ensure that development is sustainable, and proportionate and appropriate to its setting. Part E: Non-residential development in the countryside of Policy S5 would apply in this case as it would support proposals for non- residential development. It states that

'*Proposals for non-residential developments will be supported provided that:*
a. The rural location of the enterprise is justifiable to maintain or enhance the rural economy ***or*** *the location is justified by means of proximity to existing established businesses or natural features;*
b. The location of the enterprise is suitable in terms of accessibility;
c. The location of the enterprise would not result in conflict with neighbouring uses; and
d. The development is of a size and scale commensurate with the proposed use and with the rural character of the location.'

CHAPTER 6.

6. POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL AFFECTS

6.1 The bird numbers associated with the proposed development exceeds Schedule 1 threshold, and therefore an EIA is mandatory as part of the planning application process.

6.2 The scope of the Environmental Statement is detailed below:

- Landscape and Visual Impacts
- Highways and Transportation Impacts
- Ecology & Ammonia Deposition
- Manure Management

Scope of the Assessments

Landscape and Visual Impacts

6.3 Landscape and Visual Impacts are assessed in Chapter 7, and within the Landscape and Visual Appraisal at ***Appendix 2.*** The Landscape and Visual Appraisal assesses the full development described in Chapter 3. The Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal has been undertaken in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment published by The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Assessment (2019) and the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals.

Highways and Transportation Impacts

6.4 Highways and Transportation Impacts are assessed in Chapter 8, and within the Transport Statement at ***Appendix 3***. The scope of the transport assessment includes all potential traffic impacts arising from the operation of the proposed development described in Chapter 3. The assessment has been prepared in accordance with paragraphs 115 – 118 of the NPPF 2024.

Ecology & Ammonia Deposition

6.5 Ecological impacts are considered within Chapter 8, and within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal at ***Appendix 5.*** The survey and ecological assessment of the site follows the approach set out in guidance published by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2017).

6.6 Ammonia Impacts are considered within Chapter 8 and within the Ammonia Impact Assessment at ***Appendix 6.*** Ammonia Modelling has been completed using SCAIL (Simple Calculation of Atmospheric Impact Limits)

Manure Management

6.7 Manure Management is assessed in Chapter 12 and considers the project in the light of the legal cases, particularly R (Squire) v Shropshire Council [2019] EWCA Civ 888 & R (Caffyn) v Shropshire Council [2025] EWHC 1497 (Admin).

CHAPTER 7.

7. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACTS

Introduction

7.1 This chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES) presents the assessment of potential landscape and visual effects arising from the proposed development at Gulham Fields Farm, comprising the erection of six poultry houses and associated infrastructure. It summarises the findings of a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA), included as **Appendix 2** of the ES. The LVA was prepared by a Chartered Landscape Architect and follows guidance from the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, Third Edition (GLVIA3), and the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 06/19 (*Visual Representation of Development Proposals*).

7.2 The purpose of this chapter is to outline the potential impacts of the proposed development on:

- The landscape character and fabric of the site and surrounding area; and
- Views and visual amenity experienced by local receptors.

Development Description

7.3 The proposed development consists of:

- 6 no. poultry buildings, each measuring approximately 113.6m in length and 24.7m in width. The eaves height is ~3m, with a roof apex height of ~6.3m. External finishes are to be Olive Green (RAL 6003).
- 9 no. feed silos, located between the poultry buildings, each approximately 8.6m high and finished in Olive Green.
- A biomass boiler house, measuring ~47m x ~17m, with an eaves height of ~6.2m and apex height of ~7.9m (Olive Green);
- Ancillary infrastructure, including a gatehouse, generator, substation, pump house, store, water tanks;
- A concrete apron, hardstanding for vehicle access and parking, and an attenuation pond.

7.4 All proposed buildings are to be located within a part of a regular-shaped agricultural field, at an elevation of approximately 5m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), to the north of Gulham Fields Farm and west of North Gulham.

Assessment Methodology

7.5 The LVA methodology follows the approach set out in GLVIA3, which

differentiates between landscape effects (on the physical fabric and character of the landscape) and visual effects (on views and visual amenity). The study area encompasses the site and surrounding landscape up to approximately 5km, taking into account likely visibility.

7.6 Site visits and desk-based analysis were used to determine the likely significance of effects. The sensitivity of landscape receptors and visual receptors was assessed in conjunction with the magnitude of change arising from the proposals, to determine the overall effect.

Baseline Conditions

Site Context

7.7 The site lies within an arable field west of North Gulham and north of Gulham Fields Farm. The field is bordered by:

- North: Intact hedgerow along the access track;
- East: Unmarked boundary across arable land;
- South: Hedgerow adjoining Gulham Fields Farm;
- West: Partially unmarked, with the southern section abutting a ~30m wide woodland belt.

7.8 The development footprint is located on low-lying land (~5m AOD), which generally characterises the wider area.

Topography and Hydrology

- The central and western areas are low-lying (below 5m AOD).
- Eastern fringes become more undulating, rising to 10–15m AOD.
- Watercourses in the area include the River Ancholme (~1.3km west), River Rase, and Owersby Catchwater Drain.
- A network of drainage ditches and small ponds is present, particularly in the north-west of the study area.

Land Use and Vegetation

7.9 The area is predominantly **arable farmland**, interspersed with:

- Linear belts of woodland (typically 25–40m wide);
- Plantation woodland south of the site;
- Hedgerows, some with trees, defining field boundaries;
- Mature trees near Thornton le Moor and other settlement edges.

7.10 This vegetation provides moderate visual enclosure, especially in outward views from the site.

Landscape Character

7.11 The site falls within two landscape character areas:

- Kelsey's LCA – no notable effects predicted.
- Lincolnshire Clay Vale LCA – assessed as experiencing a slight adverse effect.

Landscape Effects

Effects on Landscape Character

7.12 The introduction of built form into a previously open arable field will alter the character of the immediate landscape. However, the design seeks to integrate the development by:

- Retaining and protecting existing hedgerows and trees;
- Applying a consistent, muted Olive Green finish to all new structures.

7.13 The LVA concludes:

- Slight adverse effect on the Lincolnshire Clay Vale LCA;
- Negligible effect on the Kelsey's LCA;
- These changes are not considered significant within the overall context of the study area.

Effects on Landscape Fabric

7.14 The development results in limited change to the physical landscape fabric:

- Existing hedgerows and trees will be retained and protected in accordance with BS 5837:2012;
- The development is situated on land currently in agricultural use, and the loss of arable land is not considered a significant landscape impact;
- Overall, a slight adverse effect on the site's immediate vegetation resource is identified.

Visual Effects

Visual Context

7.15 Due to the generally flat terrain and presence of hedgerows, woodland belts, and distance from settlements, views of the site are relatively limited and

filtered.

Viewpoints and Receptors

7.15 The LVA assessed 10 viewpoints, focusing on:

- Nearby residential properties;
- Roads and public rights of way;
- Isolated dwellings and farms.

7.16 The LVA concludes:

- Negligible visual effects for 9 of the 10 viewpoints;
- Up to slight adverse effect for residents at Beasthorpe House Farm due to partial views of built development through gaps in vegetation.

7.17 There are no significant effects predicted for:

- Road users;
- Walkers on nearby public rights of way;
- Distant settlement receptors.

Mitigation Measures

- Retention of existing trees and hedgerows along the site boundaries will assist in screening and softening views;
- The Olive Green (RAL 6003) colour palette for all structures reduces visual contrast with the surrounding agricultural and woodland context;
- Landscape enhancement measures such as new hedgerow or tree planting can be implemented if required by planning conditions, to further reinforce visual integration.

Residual Effects

7.18 With mitigation measures in place, the LVA concludes:

- No significant landscape or visual effects are likely to occur;
- The greatest landscape effect is slight adverse on local vegetation and the Lincolnshire Clay Vale LCA;
- The greatest visual effect is up to slight adverse on residents at Beasthorpe House Farm.

Summary and Conclusions

7.19 The LVA demonstrates that the proposed development at Gulham Fields Farm can be accommodated in the receiving landscape without significant harm. The design responds appropriately to local character, topography, and existing vegetation, and mitigation through retention of landscape features and careful colour treatment ensures the integration of new structures into the rural setting.

7.20 In conclusion, the proposed development is considered acceptable in landscape and visual terms, with no significant effects identified.

Environmental Assessment Level

7.21 Based on the Environmental Assessment Methodology as set out in table 3.2 of page 14 of this Environmental Statement, Landscape and Visual Impacts are assessed as **low** (*A minor, localised effect that does not adversely affect environmental features or receptors. Effects are limited in scale or distance, and do not compromise existing land uses).* This assessment has been informed by the Landscape and Visual Appraisal at Appendix 2.

CHAPTER 9

8. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS

Introduction

8.1 This chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES) considers the potential traffic and transport impacts associated with the proposed development for the erection of six poultry houses and associated infrastructure at Gulham Fields Farm, Gulham Road, North Owersby. It should be read in conjunction with the full Transport Statement prepared by DTA Transportation, which is appended at **Appendix 3**.

8.2 The assessment reviews the suitability of the existing transport infrastructure, the anticipated traffic generation of the proposed development, and the implications for road safety and highway capacity. Consultation has been undertaken with Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) as the local highway authority, and their position has informed the conclusions of this chapter.

Baseline Conditions

8.3 The application site is located off Gulham Road. The surrounding highway network comprises primarily rural roads with low traffic volumes and serves mainly agricultural and residential uses.

8.4 A review of the most recent five-year personal injury collision data for the area surrounding the site was carried out as part of the Transport Statement. This review confirms there are no existing highway safety issues within the study area, suggesting that the local road network is operating safely under current conditions.

Proposed Development and Operational Traffic

8.5 The proposed poultry unit will operate on a 38-day growing cycle, with day-old chicks placed in the buildings at the beginning of each cycle. At the conclusion of each cycle, the birds will be removed over a two-day period (days 37 and 38), after which the site will remain empty for approximately 10 days for cleaning and preparation for the next cycle.

8.6 The transport movements associated with the development will vary throughout the cycle:

- Days 30, 37, and 38 (peak days): up to 10 two-way HGV movements (i.e., 20 vehicle trips).
- All other days of the cycle: up to 4 two-way HGV movements per day (i.e., 8 vehicle trips

8.7 The Transport Statement concludes that the proposed development will not result in a material increase in traffic volumes to or from the site. The level of traffic generation, even at its peak, is low and consistent with agricultural activities typical of rural areas.

8.8 Given the limited number of vehicle movements and their distribution across the cycle, the effect of the development on the operation and capacity of the local highway network will be negligible. There is no indication that the proposal would contribute to congestion or pose a significant burden to existing road users.

8.9 Furthermore, the access arrangements to the site are suitable for the types of vehicles expected, and visibility at the site access complies with standards for rural road speeds. There are no physical works proposed to the public highway in association with the development.

Highway Safety and Mitigation

8.9 As noted, the review of local road safety data reveals no existing accident trends or concerns. The modest increase in vehicle movements will not materially change the risk profile of the local highway network.

8.10 Nonetheless, in response to consultation, Lincolnshire County Council has requested a Section 106 contribution of £100,000 towards local highway improvements and maintenance. The applicant, Mercer Farming, has agreed in principle to this contribution, which will ensure that any cumulative or longer-term impacts on the highway network are appropriately mitigated.

Policy Compliance

8.11 The proposals have been assessed in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024), which states that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds if the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe .

8.12 Based on the analysis undertaken, the development:

- Would not result in severe residual impacts;
- Would not compromise highway safety;
- Would not lead to a material increase in traffic congestion.

8.13 The proposal therefore accords with the relevant transport policies in the NPPF 2024 (paragraphs 115 – 118).

Summary and Conclusions

8.14 The transport and access impacts of the proposed poultry development have been thoroughly assessed. The scheme is expected to generate low volumes of traffic, with peak activity confined to short, infrequent periods within the

production cycle.

8.15 There are no highway safety issues arising from the proposal, and the scheme will be supported by a financial contribution to the local authority for ongoing highway improvements. As such, the transport effects of the development are considered negligible and acceptable in planning terms.

Environmental Assessment Level

8.16 Based on the Environmental Assessment Methodology as set out in table 3.2 of page 14 of this Environmental Statement, Highways and Transportation Impacts are assessed as **low** (*A minor, localised effect that does not adversely affect environmental features or receptors. Effects are limited in scale or distance, and do not compromise existing land uses).* This assessment has been informed by the Transport Statement at Appendix 3.

CHAPTER 8

9. ECOLOGY & AMMONIA DEPOSITON

ECOLOGY

Introduction

9.1 This chapter presents an assessment of the potential ecological impacts arising from the proposed development of a poultry unit at Gulham Fields Farm, Gulham Road, North Owersby. The proposals comprise the erection of six poultry houses and associated infrastructure, with access via an existing track.

9.2 The ecological assessment has been informed by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) undertaken by Brown & Co (Appendix 4), which included a desk-based review of existing ecological data and a UKHab field survey of the Site undertaken on 20 March 2025. This chapter identifies the ecological baseline of the Site, assesses potential impacts, and outlines necessary mitigation and enhancement measures to ensure compliance with relevant ecological legislation and planning policy.

Methodology

Desk-Based Assessment

9.3 A desk study was undertaken to collate existing ecological records and designations within a 2 km radius of the Site. Data was sourced from:

- Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership local records centre
- Online resources and mapping tools (e.g. MAGIC, Ordnance Survey, Google Earth)

9.4 The search area considered statutory and non-statutory designations, priority habitats, and records of protected and notable species.

Field Survey

9.5 A UKHab habitat classification survey was carried out by a qualified ecologist on 20 March 2025. Habitats were mapped and classified, and the potential of these habitats to support protected or notable species was evaluated in accordance with standard ecological survey guidance.

Baseline Conditions

Site Description

9.6 The Site comprises a flat parcel of land situated at Gulham Fields Farm. The primary habitat is arable cropland, with an existing hardstanding track to the north and east. There are no watercourses or woodland within the Site boundary.

Designated Sites

9.7 No statutory designated nature conservation sites lie within or immediately adjacent to the Site. Non-statutory designations within 2 km were identified but are not considered to be affected by the proposed development due to distance, lack of hydrological connectivity, and the nature of the development.

Habitats

9.8 The following habitats were identified on Site:
- Arable cropland – the dominant land use
- Hardstanding track – along the northern and eastern Site boundaries

9.9 These habitats are of limited ecological value but may support some protected species as outlined below.

Protected and Notable Species

9.10 Based on habitat suitability and local records, the following species may be present or utilise the Site:
- Nesting birds – likely to nest in field margins or vegetation >300 mm in height during the breeding season (March–August).
- Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) – potential for foraging within the Site; no evidence of nesting was recorded.
- Brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*) – the arable field may be used for foraging or temporary shelter.

9.11 No specific evidence of other protected or priority species was recorded during the PEA survey.

Assessment of Likely Effects

Construction Phase
Potential Impacts:
- Disturbance to nesting birds during vegetation clearance.
- Risk of injury or mortality to hedgehogs or brown hares during groundworks.
- Temporary habitat loss during site clearance.

Operational Phase
Potential Impacts:
- Minimal direct impacts expected due to limited ecological value of the post-development land use.
- Potential for limited disturbance to wildlife from lighting and human activity.

Mitigation and Recommendations

Construction-Phase Mitigation

- **Nesting Birds**: Vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside the core nesting bird season (March–August). If unavoidable, a pre-works nesting bird check should be carried out by a qualified ecologist within 48 hours prior to works.
- **Hedgehog**: Any potential refugia (e.g. compost piles, debris, tall grass) should be checked and avoided where possible. Site clearance should proceed cautiously with hand tools in suitable areas.
- **Brown Hare**: Any excavations should be backfilled or covered overnight to prevent entrapment. Visual checks should be carried out each morning before works commence.
- **Other Fauna**: Site operatives should be briefed on the possibility of encountering protected species and advised on how to respond.

Environmental Protection

- All construction activity should follow best practice pollution prevention guidelines.
- Materials should be stored securely and away from potential drainage paths.

Residual Effects

9.12 Following implementation of the recommended mitigation measures, residual ecological impacts are expected to be **negligible**. No significant long-term effects on protected species or habitats are anticipated.

Enhancement Opportunities

9.13 In line with current best practice and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), opportunities for biodiversity enhancement should be considered. These may include:

- Planting native hedgerows or wildflower margins around the development
- Installation of bird nesting boxes and hedgehog passes
- Establishing a habitat buffer strip between the development and retained field margins

Conclusion

9.14 The ecological assessment has identified limited baseline ecological value within the Site, with potential for transient use by nesting birds, hedgehog, and brown hare. Subject to the implementation of standard mitigation measures, the proposed development is not predicted to give rise to any significant adverse effects on biodiversity.

Environmental Assessment Level

9.15 Based on the Environmental Assessment Methodology as set out in table 3.2 of page 14 of this Environmental Statement, Ecological Impacts are assessed as **low** (*A minor, localised effect that does not adversely affect environmental features or receptors. Effects are limited in scale or distance, and do not compromise existing land uses).* This assessment has been informed by the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal at Appendix 4.

AMMONIA AND NITROGEN DEPOSITION

Introduction

9.16 This chapter addresses the potential impacts of ammonia emissions and nitrogen deposition associated with the proposed poultry development at Gulham Fields Farm, Gulham Road, North Owersby, Lincolnshire. The proposal involves the construction of six poultry houses with associated infrastructure, accommodating up to 240,000 broiler chickens.

9.17 In support of the planning application, an ammonia screening assessment has been prepared and is included as Appendix 5 of this Environmental Statement. The assessment was carried out in accordance with recognised modelling tools and relevant guidance to determine potential impacts on nearby statutory ecological receptors.

Assessment Methodology

9.18 The ammonia screening assessment was undertaken using the **SCAIL Agriculture** model (Simple Calculation of Atmospheric Impact Limits), a tool developed specifically to assess air quality impacts from agricultural sources. The model inputs were based on the development's full operational capacity of 240,000 broiler chickens and the site location (OS Grid Reference: X503270, Y395240).

9.19 A 10 km radius was applied for the ecological receptor search, consistent with best practice for screening potential impacts on statutory protected sites.

Identification of Sensitive Receptors

9.20 Four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) were identified within a 10 km radius of the proposed development. These are:

- **Site 1: Kingerby Beck Meadows SSSI** – 2.34 km from the development
- **Site 2: Normanby Meadow SSSI** – 5.77 km from the development
- **Site 3: Cliff House SSSI** – 6.55 km from the development
- **Site 4: Nettleton Chalk Pit SSSI** – 9.63 km from the development

9.21 Of these, the first three sites are designated for ecological features sensitive to

atmospheric ammonia and nitrogen deposition. Nettleton Chalk Pit is a geological SSSI and does not require further consideration for air quality impacts.

9.22 Site-specific sensitivity was determined using the Air Pollution Information System (APIS), which provides critical levels and loads for atmospheric pollutants based on site designation and qualifying interest features.

Model Results

9.23 The SCAIL model results indicate the following maximum process contributions (PCs) to ammonia concentration, nitrogen deposition, and acid deposition at the three sensitive sites:

Table 9.1

Site Number	Site Name	Distance from the site km	Process Contribution % Ammonia (NH3)	Process Contribution % Nitrogen (N)	Process Contribution % (Acid)
1	Kingerby Beck Meadows SSSI	2.338	0	1%	1%
2	Normanby Meadow SSSI	5.766	0	0	0
3	Cliff House SSSI	6.553	0	0	0

9.24 These results reflect negligible emissions at all receptor sites, with the maximum recorded contribution being 1% of the critical load at Kingerby Beck Meadows SSSI for nitrogen and acid deposition. Ammonia concentrations at all sites were modelled as 0%, indicating no measurable contribution from the development.

Compliance with Regulatory Thresholds

9.25 The Environment Agency (EA) and Natural England provide threshold values to assess the significance of process contributions to designated sites:

- The EA's threshold for ammonia emissions to SSSI sites is 20% of the critical level or load for process contributions alone.
    - The Natural England Interim Guidance (May 2022) sets a precautionary threshold of 1% of the critical level or load for

process contributions to sensitive habitats.

9.26 The modelling demonstrates that the proposed development is fully compliant with both the EA and Natural England guidance. The highest process contribution of 1% (at Kingerby Beck Meadows) falls within the acceptable range, indicating that the development will not cause adverse effects on designated ecological sites.

Summary and Conclusions

9.27 The ammonia and nitrogen deposition screening assessment has demonstrated that the proposed poultry development at Gulham Fields Farm will result in negligible air quality impacts on nearby sensitive ecological receptors. No process contribution exceeded the threshold of 1% for any receptor site.

9.28 Consequently, the proposal is considered to be environmentally acceptable in relation to ammonia and nitrogen deposition, and no further detailed modelling or mitigation is required. The development complies with the relevant guidance and regulatory thresholds established by the Environment Agency and Natural England.

Environmental Assessment Level

9.29 Based on the Environmental Assessment Methodology as set out in table 3.2 of page 14 of this Environmental Statement, Ammonia and Nitrogen Deposition Impacts are assessed as **low** (*A minor, localised effect that does not adversely affect environmental features or receptors. Effects are limited in scale or distance, and do not compromise existing land uses).* This assessment has been informed by the Ammonia Impact Assessment at Appendix 5.

CHAPTER 10

10. MANURE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Introduction

10.1 This chapter sets out the proposed waste management practices associated with the operation of the poultry unit at Gulham Fields Farm. It focuses specifically on the management and disposal of poultry manure, which is the principal waste stream generated by the facility. The information provided responds to relevant legal precedents and best practice guidance on the assessment of potential impacts on designated habitats, residential amenity, and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Waste Generation and Handling

10.2 The proposed poultry unit comprises four poultry houses with a combined capacity of 240,000 broiler chickens. Each flock cycle lasts approximately 38 days, after which all manure (also referred to as poultry litter) is removed from the houses and exported from the site.

10.3 Based on standard manure generation rates of 1.45kg per bird per flock, each cycle will produce approximately 348 tonnes of manure. With 7.5 flock cycles per annum, the total annual manure production will be approximately 2,610 tonnes.

10.4 All manure will be collected and transported off-site in sheeted trailers immediately following depopulation and cleaning of the sheds. The manure will be delivered to Thetford Power Station, a licensed facility permitted to receive and process organic waste streams including poultry litter.

Thetford Power Station

10.5 Thetford Power Station is a 35.8MW biomass energy facility operating under Environmental Permit No. EPR/PP3235LP, which authorises the processing of up to 550,000 tonnes per annum of poultry litter, horse bedding, meat and bone meal, and wood chip.

10.6 The combustion of poultry litter at this facility displaces fossil fuels and contributes to renewable electricity generation, thereby delivering a net reduction in GHG emissions. The Power Station is equipped with appropriate flue gas treatment and emissions abatement systems to ensure compliance with air quality limits.

10.7 As the manure is not spread on land, the proposed operation avoids any contribution to nutrient pollution in the wider environment. In particular, there is no risk of adverse effects on designated ecological receptors such as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Ramsar Sites, or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). The controlled disposal

route prevents cumulative effects associated with nutrient deposition, ammonia emissions, or nitrate leaching.

Environmental Safeguards and Legal Context

10.8 The manure management strategy has been assessed in light of recent legal judgments relevant to poultry developments and waste disposal, notably:
- R (Squire) v Shropshire Council [2019] EWCA Civ 888
- R (Caffyn) v Shropshire Council [2025] EWHC 1497 (Admin)

10.9 These cases emphasise the importance of considering indirect environmental effects, particularly in relation to sensitive habitats and residential amenity, even when waste is disposed of off-site.

Protected Habitats and Indirect Effects (Caffyn)

10.10 The Caffyn case clarified that planning authorities must consider whether exported manure could result in nutrient impacts elsewhere, even when not stored or spread on the application site. If a potential pathway to sensitive sites exists, this may necessitate screening under the Habitats Regulations.

10.11 In this instance, all manure from Grange Farm will be transported directly to Thetford Power Station for incineration. The Power Station is a permitted energy-from-waste facility (Permit Ref: EPR/PP3235LP). There is no spreading on agricultural land, on- or off-site. As such, there is no nutrient loading pathway to affect protected habitats. The approach is therefore consistent with the requirements and precautionary principles set out in Caffyn.

Residential Amenity (Squire)

10.12 The Squire judgment highlighted the need to consider odour, dust, and general nuisance impacts arising from manure storage or land application, even when those impacts may occur off-site.

10.13 In this case, no manure will be stored or spread on-site, and all material is exported promptly in sheeted trailers. Transport directly to Thetford Power Station avoids any local odour or fly nuisance and ensures that there will be no significant impact on residential amenity in the surrounding area, consistent with the guidance in Squire.

GHG Emissions and Regulatory Controls

10.14 By diverting manure to a renewable energy facility, the proposed development supports the decarbonisation of the energy sector. The use of poultry litter as a biomass fuel contributes to emissions reduction targets by displacing fossil fuel consumption.

10.15 Thetford Power Station operates under a strict Environmental Permit which includes controls on air emissions such as particulates, NOx, and CO_2. These regulatory safeguards ensure that combustion of the manure remains within acceptable environmental limits and does not pose a significant air quality or health risk.

Conclusion

10.16 The proposed waste management arrangements for Grange Farm have been developed to ensure legal compliance and environmental protection. In particular:

- All manure is removed from site and disposed of at a licensed biomass power station;
- There is no land spreading or storage, eliminating pathways for nutrient pollution;
- The manure is used to generate renewable energy, providing a net environmental benefit;
- The proposed approach is fully compliant with the legal principles established in Squire and Caffyn.

10.17 Accordingly, the Local Planning Authority can be satisfied that the waste and manure management arrangements:

- Do not pose a risk to protected habitats or designated sites;
- Do not cause unacceptable impacts on residential amenity;
- Represent a legally robust and environmentally sustainable solution.

10.18 Based on the assessment criteria in table 3.2 (page 14) of this Environmental Statement, the Manure Management Impacts are assessed as **Low**.

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

1.1 This non-technical summary has been produced to summarise the issues, mitigation measures and effects relating to the proposed development of four poultry buildings and associated infrastructure at land forming part of Gulham Fields Farm, Gulham Road, North Owersby. The full extent of the proposed development is shown in the table below.

Element	**Dimensions**
6 No. Poultry Houses	110m x 24.69m with an eaves height of 3m and a ridge height of 6.32m.
3 No link Control Rooms	Linking each pair of poultry sheds extending to 189m2.
9 No. Feed Bins	3.5m diameter, 8.6m height.
Concrete Apron	4325 sq.m
Dirty Water Tanks	2 No. 20,000 litre dirty water tanks (underground)
Biomass Boiler House	42m x 16.7m with an eaves height of 6.2m and a ridge height of 7.85m.
Car Parking	Car Parking for 3 cars
Gas Tanks (1)	5 No. Gas Tanks
Water Tanks	2 No Circular water tanks with a diameter of 6.98m and a height of 5.345m.
Pump House and Store	14.4m x 4m with an eaves height of 2.6m and a ridge height of 3.152m.
Gate House	9.03m x 7m with an eaves height of 2.591m x 3.215m.
Backup Generator	9.5m x 4m with an eaves height of 2.4m and a ridge height of 2.952m
Sub Station	3.5m x 3m with an eaves height of 2.4m and a ridge height of 2.796m.
Drainage Attenuation Pond	1905 m3 of water storage.

1.2 The proposed poultry houses will each house 40,000 birds. Following the development, the capacity of the farm will be 240,000 birds.

Assessment of Significance of Environmental Effects

1.3 In terms of the potential environmental effects, these have been assessed in accordance with the significance criterion outlined below.

Level	**Definition**
None	*No discernible environmental effect beyond those already occurring under the existing agricultural regime.*
Low	*A minor, localised effect that does not adversely affect environmental features or receptors. Effects are limited in scale or distance, and do not compromise existing land uses.*
Medium	*A moderate effect that results in some impact on environmental features or receptors, but not to a degree considered significant under applicable planning or environmental regulations.*
High	*A significant environmental effect. This may require mitigation or result in notable changes to environmental quality or land use.*
Positive	*A beneficial effect that enhances environmental quality or contributes positively to existing environmental conditions.*

1.4 The scheme has been designed to take into account the potential environmental effects, with mitigation inherent in the project design. The scope of assessment included within the Environmental Impact Assessment includes the following:

- Landscape and Visual Impacts
- Highways and Transportation Impacts
- Ecological Impacts & Ammonia Deposition
- Manure Management

1.5 The impact relating to these issues is summarised in the following sections.

Environmental Impact

Issue	Mitigation Measures	Effect Assuming Mitigation
Landscape and Visual Impacts	Retention of existing trees and hedgerows along the site boundaries will assist in screening and softening views; The Olive Green (RAL 6003) colour palette for all structures reduces visual contrast with the surrounding agricultural and woodland context;	**Low (not significant)** The LVA demonstrates that the proposed development at Gulham Fields Farm can be accommodated in the receiving landscape without significant harm. The design responds appropriately to local character, topography, and existing vegetation, and mitigation through retention of landscape features and careful colour treatment ensures the integration of new structures into the rural setting.
Highways and Transportation Impacts		**Low (not significant)** The scheme is expected to generate low volumes of traffic, with peak activity confined to short, infrequent periods within the production cycle. There are no highway safety issues arising from the proposal, and the scheme will be supported by a financial contribution to the local authority for ongoing highway improvements.
Ecological Impacts		**Low (not significant)** The ecological assessment has identified limited

		baseline ecological value within the Site, with potential for transient use by nesting birds, hedgehog, and brown hare. Subject to the implementation of standard mitigation measures, the proposed development is not predicted to give rise to any significant adverse effects on biodiversity.
Ammonia Deposition		**Low (not significant)** The impact at statutory sites is below 1% of the relevant critical level / load at all sites considered.
Manure Management	All manure removed from the site in sheeted trailers for disposal via biomass power station.	**Low (not significant)** The proposed manure management arrangements have been carefully designed and documented to ensure compliance with national planning policy and environmental law.

1.6 In conclusion, the proposed poultry unit at Gulham Fields Farm will not produce any significant Environmental Impacts. From the information appraised through the Environmental Impact Assessment process, it is clear that the proposed redevelopment will have low impact on the environment taking into account the migration measures proposed.

1.7 No technical difficulties were encountered in preparing this Environmental Statement or assessing the impacts of the proposed development. The preparation of the Environmental Assessment has taken into account the results of UK environmental assessments.

Ian Pick BSc (Hons) MRICS,
July 2025