**Pig Farm Planning Application Objection Template:**

**Instructions:**

1. Include site details
2. Make it clear that you object
3. Make sure you add your name at the bottom of the letter
4. Tailor your objection so each one submitted is different and less easily dismissed
5. Some councils want your address. In this scenario ask that your address be redacted when your objection is published
6. Use local and global arguments. If local – say so and how this will impact on you as a resident plus any site specific information that you are aware of, if not local emphasis that many of the issues relating to factory farm impact wider populations e.g. avian ‘flu / antibiotic resistance are global issues
7. Be aware that animal welfare alone is unlikely to get this farm refused so include a wide range of arguments to make your case.

**Template**

Submission method: [ how do objectors file their objection]

To : [email address]

Ref: [Planning Application Number: xxxxxx]

Address: [Address of site application refers to]

Proposal: [ what is being proposed]

Date: [submission date]

Dear Planning Officer,

I object to this proposal on the following grounds:

*Insert personal intro – why important to you – you live locally, you know someone who died of an antibiotic resistant infection, you have kids / grand kids and are deeply worried about their future, you are horrified/ scared etc*

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

The proposed development violates the principles of sustainable development as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It will have detrimental rather than beneficial consequences when measured against the environmental, social, or economic objectives necessary for sustainable development and the NPPF says “*Significant adverse impacts on these objectives should be avoided and, wherever possible, alternative options which reduce or eliminate such impacts should be pursued.” [[1]](#footnote-1)*

The installation is unlikely to bring economic growth to the area given the low number of jobs generated and the impact on traffic, noise, odour and the visual landscape. It will have significant negative environmental and ecological impact and furthermore, presents scientifically proven risks to the health of residents and the wider national and global populations.

**Health risks – a local authority’s responsibilities**

*“Noise, smell, toxic air, chronic disease and water pollution from factory farms affect neighbouring communities first, often transforming local ecologies and endangering health and welfare.* *Beyond the reduced quality of life and associated stress, there are tangible links to physical responses. When the air quality worsens, which can occur a couple of times a week, residents frequently experience respiratory difficulties, headaches, nausea, persistent coughing and sometimes burning eyes. Research suggests flu-like symptoms are among the initial reactions to exposure to hydrogen sulphide and ammonia, two byproducts from factory farming.”[[2]](#footnote-2)*

There can be no greater argument for a public interest material consideration than that of the risks posed by a development to the health of people living in the vicinity and the wider population.

**Government guidance on determining a planning application** states that: *“planning is concerned with land use in the public interest.”* [[3]](#footnote-3)

**The Health and Social Care Act 2012** states that: *“Each local authority must take such steps as it considers appropriate for improving the health of the people in its area.”* [[4]](#footnote-4)

**Local government leading for public health** states: “*Building on local government’s long and proud history of public health leadership, our vision is for local authorities to use their new responsibilities and resources to put health and wellbeing at the heart of everything they do, thereby helping people to lead healthier lives, both mentally and physically. This means:*

*• including health in all policies so that each decision seeks the most health benefit for the investment, and asking key questions such as “what will this do for the health and wellbeing of the population?” and “will this reduce health inequalities locally?”*

*• encouraging health promoting environments, for example, access to green spaces and transport and reducing exposure to environmental pollutants”*.[[5]](#footnote-5)

**Local physical health issues**

**Respiratory problems**

In 2019, Defra said that: *“Agriculture was responsible for 87% of UK emissions of ammonia in 2017, mainly from livestock farming and fertiliser use”.* And that *“ammonia emissions affect human health.”**[[6]](#footnote-6)*

Scientists undertaking a large-scale epidemiological study among 2500 neighbouring residents of livestock farms concluded that:

* *“Higher ammonia concentrations in the air are associated with acute deficits in lung function in adults and asthmatic children living in livestock-dense areas*
* *Patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) living near livestock farms report more symptoms and are more often diagnosed with an exacerbation than patients living further away from farms.”* [[7]](#footnote-7)

**Traffic, Parking and Road Safety**

Increased traffic from trucks transporting animals and feed on narrow country roads can pose safety risks to local residents who may use the roads for walking, cycling or horse riding.

Increased traffic may also have an effect on air quality.

**Health issues that impact local and global communities**

**Zoonotic disease**

All farm animals naturally carry a range of diseases, some of which can also affect humans (zoonoses). According to the Health and Safety Executive, there are approximately 40 potential zoonoses in the UK and 300,000 people in a variety of occupations are potentially exposed.[[8]](#footnote-8) Please consider the **list of Government recognised zoonotic diseases in the UK [[9]](#footnote-9)**. It is a long and frightening one.

Just to exemplify this further, listed UK diseases linked to just pigs (there are similar lists for other farmed species) include:

* Swine Flu ([Animal influenza](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/swine-influenza))
* [Cysticercosis](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/taeniasis-cysticercosis) / Taeniasis
* [Erysipeloid](http://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/zoonoses-data-sheets/erysipeloid.pdf)
* [Hepatitis E](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hepatitis-e)
* Streptococcal sepsis ([Streptococcus suis](http://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/zoonoses-data-sheets/streptococcus-suis.pdf)) (symptoms are usually flu-like initially, although they often progress to **meningitis, septicaemia or endocarditis (infection of heart valves). The disease may progress to Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS), which often leads to multiple organ failure and subsequently death.)**

**Pandemic risk from zoonotic influenza**

Scientists have warned that Covid-19 is a “dress rehearsal” for worse to come. They are talking about the climate crisis and/or a zoonotic influenza pandemic.

Avian and swine influenza have caused all four influenza pandemics since 1918, killing millions of people.[[10]](#footnote-10)

**UK Government** documents say:

“*one of the highest current risks to the UK is the possible emergence of an influenza pandemic”* [[11]](#footnote-11) *“– that is, the rapid worldwide spread of influenza caused by a novel virus strain to which people would have no immunity, resulting in more serious illness than caused by seasonal influenza”.[[12]](#footnote-12)*

“*As such, it is impossible to forecast the precise characteristics, spread and impact of a new influenza virus strain, however, based on historical information and scientific evidence we are able to predict the possible impacts:* ***Many millions of people around the world will become infected, up to around 50% become ill with symptoms and a variable proportion die from the disease itself or from complications such as pneumonia. In the UK, up to one half of the population may become infected and between 20,000 and 750,000 additional deaths*** *(that is deaths that would not have happened over the same period of time had a pandemic not taken place) may have occurred by the end of a pandemic in the UK”*.[[13]](#footnote-13)

The Department of Health says:

*“An influenza pandemic could emerge anywhere in the world, including in the UK”.* And *“It will not be possible to stop the spread of, or to eradicate, the pandemic influenza virus, either in the country of origin or in the UK, as it will spread too rapidly and too widely”.* [[14]](#footnote-14)

**How factory farms are involved**

*“Influenza A viruses are the only [influenza] ones with a pandemic potential. Influenza A virus is endemic in a number of species including humans, birds and pigs. Gene reassortmentscan thus occur between human and animal influenza A viruses and lead to a new virus subtype which can be pathogenic to humans”*[[15]](#footnote-15)

Intensive farms, defined by large numbers of animals, confined in small spaces, have been shown to accelerate disease risk with 56% of avian flu epidemics originating on commercial poultry farms (70 times more than wet markets).[[16]](#footnote-16)

*“Factors in intensive animal husbandry that affect the occurrence of infectious disease and its control include population density, animal movements, poor management and hygiene practices, and genetic constitutions that are one-sided directed at economic parameters”.* *[[17]](#footnote-17)*

Biosecurity is almost impossible to achieve fully as Defra recognises in this statement: *“It is not possible to prevent all airborne infections from entering a unit”. [[18]](#footnote-18)* and in 2022, the Chief Veterinary Officer, Dr Middlemiss confirmed that: *“A teaspoon full of infected bird droppings will have thousands and thousands of infected viral doses in it. It takes a really small amount of virus to create an outbreak.” [[19]](#footnote-19)*

A 2018 study found traces of an avian virus in air samples 50-110 metres from the infected farm even after the birds had been removed.[[20]](#footnote-20) Other farms have been affected despite being *“well managed with reasonable biosecurity measures in place”*.[[21]](#footnote-21)

All this is compounded, as stated in aUK paper on Campylobacter on poultry farms, by the fact that: *“research has repeatedly demonstrated that farmers’ uptake of biosecurity recommendations is often poor”[[22]](#footnote-22)*

**Antibiotic resistance**

The World Health Organization says ***"Antibiotic resistance is one of the biggest threats to global health, food security, and development today."*** [[23]](#footnote-23)

Antibiotic resistance is a major global problem and there are currently 1.27 million deaths a year linked directly to antibiotic resistance.

Scientists estimate that antibiotic resistance contributes to around 7,600 direct deaths and 35,200 indirect deaths in the UK each year, costing the NHS approximately £95 million annually.[[24]](#footnote-24),[[25]](#footnote-25)

The nature of intensive farming generally leads to greater use of antibiotics and the use of antibiotics in farmed animals contributes to the acceleration of resistance.

*“Farm animals consume one-third of all antibiotics in the UK and it is intensive farming systems that use drugs at unnecessarily high levels, putting human health at risk. The routine use of antibiotics in intensive farming systems is driving this problem. Drugs are given to animals as a preventative measure – before they show signs of illness – to compensate for animals being housed in cramped, unsanitary conditions where infections spread fast. Intensively reared pigs and poultry account for 79 % of UK farming antibiotic use*” [[26]](#footnote-26)

The World Health Organization says that:

*“Antibiotic resistance occurs naturally, but misuse of antibiotics In humans and animals is accelerating the process.”*[[27]](#footnote-27)

Resistant bacteria can pass from farmed animals to humans via close contact, in the food chain when raw meat is handled or undercooked meat is eaten, or via vegetables and in water when manure is spread on the land and leaches into waterways.

Examples of this occurring are Salmonella and Campylobacter, where most of the resistance in human infections comes from the farm use of antibiotics.[[28]](#footnote-28)

**Diet related health issues**

A large study involving nearly 500,000 adults in the UK found that the consumption of red and processed meats is linked to a higher risk of coronary artery disease, pneumonia, diverticular disease, colon polyps, and diabetes. Higher consumption of poultry meat was associated with higher risks of GERD, gastritis and duodenitis, diverticular disease, gallbladder disease, and diabetes.[[29]](#footnote-29)

Conversely, an analysis by the Office of Health Economics found that an England-wide adoption of plant-based diets could save the NHS £6.7 billion a year, owing to 2.1 million fewer cases of disease. [[30]](#footnote-30)

The UK’s Eatwell Guide recommends that adults eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables each day. Only 33% of adults and 12% of 11–18-year-olds achieve this target. Henry Dimbleby’s independent review recommended that the Government should deliver a 30% increase in fruit and vegetable consumption across the population by 2032.[[31]](#footnote-31)

We do not need more farms producing animal products.

**Local issues affecting mental health**

**Odour**

Factory farms can generate significant odour, which can detract from the quality of life for local residents, impacting their ability to enjoy the countryside. Residents living close to factory farms have reported being unable to invite friends over, open windows or hang washing out due to the smells.

Media reports highlighted the concern in relation to an application by Cranswick as *“Horror stories of swarms of flies and pungent smells plaguing other communities living near other Cranswick farms”* [[32]](#footnote-32) [[33]](#footnote-33)

**Noise**

Factory farms can generate significant noise which can be a nuisance for nearby residents.

**Landscape & Visual Impact**

Modern intensive farms are generally significant in size and structurally functional, detracting from the beauty of an area.

**Environmental issues**

**Issues impacting local ecology**

The State of Nature Report 2023 showed that almost half of birds and a third of mammals in the UK are at risk of extinction. Pollinating insects (bees, hoverflies and moths) worth millions of pounds to UK agriculture showed an average decrease in distribution of 18%.[[34]](#footnote-34)

The 2022 Global Biodiversity Framework set targets for the countries that signed the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). These include achieving effective conservation and management of at least 30% of land and sea by 2030 (‘30 by 30’).

According to the National Food Strategy, **85% of the UK's total agricultural land, including 40% of the most arable land[[35]](#footnote-35),** **is used to grow food for animals** rather than for human consumption or rewilding.[[36]](#footnote-36)

Natural England analysed evidence from agri-environment schemes and stewardship options and recommends prioritising growing crops for direct human consumption to boost biodiversity rather than using land for animal feed.[[37]](#footnote-37)

Animal agriculture does not protect wildlife – quite the opposite – as this Defra 2019 report illustrates*:*

***“Biodiversity*** *- Farming practices can have many impacts that can lead to a reduction in wildlife biodiversity (including loss of habitats and food sources). The UK farmland bird index, an indicator of the state of wildlife generally, has fallen to less than half its 1970 value”.* **[[38]](#footnote-38)**

Evidence shows that removing animals farmed as food from the land increases diversity and the abundance of almost all groups of wild animals, including pollinators. The only animal that benefitted was the dung beetle.[[39]](#footnote-39)

**Water use and pollution**

Animal agriculture negatively impacts the environment, as the pollution of the River Wye by chicken farms shows.[[40]](#footnote-40)

As a single pig may produce up to 6.4 kg of wet manure per day[[41]](#footnote-41), large animal breeding facilities produce vast amounts of animal faeces, resulting in the production of 1.7 billion tons of faeces annually worldwide.[[42]](#footnote-42) A single pig can produce up to 13lbs of manure a day.[[43]](#footnote-43)

Intensive animal farms in England have breached environmental regulations thousands of times in recent years. Among the more than 3,000 incidents were the “routine” discharge of slurry and dirty water, maggot-infested carcass bins, and the illegal incineration of pigs.[[44]](#footnote-44)

Runoff from factory farms can contaminate water sources, impacting local ecosystems and *“Ammonia and nitrogen pollution, mostly from agriculture, is harming more than 60% of the UK’s land area and affecting the most sensitive habitats*, *according to a DEFRA report. Ammonia pollution also effects species composition through soil acidification, direct toxic damage to leaves and by altering the susceptibility of plants to frost, drought and pathogens. At its most serious, certain sensitive and iconic habitats may be lost.*”[[45]](#footnote-45)

**Global environmental issues:**

Animal agriculture is a significant contributor to GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions, air–ground-water pollution (dangerous effluents, pathogens), high land and water use, habitat loss, the destruction of other species and finely balanced ecosystems.

**Climate change - greenhouse gases**

Three-quarters of people in the UK are concerned about climate change.[[46]](#footnote-46)

Animal agriculture is a major contributor to the climate catastrophe – responsible for up to 19.6% of global greenhouse gas emissions.[[47]](#footnote-47) The National Food Strategy estimates that methane reduction technologies will only decrease farming emissions by 10% and recommends reducing meat consumption by at least 30% to achieve meaningful mitigation of the climate catastrophe.[[48]](#footnote-48)

*“Reducing methane associated with meat and dairy is … a critical lever that will influence how quickly or slowly the world heats up in the near-term. Cutting large amounts of methane through a prompt transformation of our meat and dairy sector could be key, together with a fossil fuel phaseout, for an iconic victory against catastrophic climate change.”* Greenpeace report [[49]](#footnote-49)

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change encourages the uptake of diets rich in plant-based foods to combat the climate catastrophe.[[50]](#footnote-50)

The Climate Change Act 2008[[51]](#footnote-51) set legally binding targets for C02 emissions of 80% by 2050 and 34% by 2020. The government sees Local Authorities as “central to delivering this target”.

In 2007, Defra said: *“The production of food from animal agriculture is a significant source of emissions in the UK, especially the production of GHGs and pollution of water sources. For pigs and poultry, the main pollutants are ammonia and N2O. Nitrous oxide (N2O) has 296 times the Global Warming Potential of CO****2*** *and ammonia (NH3), contributes significantly to acidification of rain and soils. The agriculture sector accounts for around 37%, 66% and 88% of total UK emissions of CH4, N2O and NH3, respectively (NAEI, 2007), nearly all of which is derived from livestock production.”*

**If the science was clear in 2007, why are planning applications for intensive livestock units still being approved when the Government sees Local Authorities as central to delivering its CO2 emission targets?**

Climate change is likely to be exacerbated by i) the increased greenhouse gases from the installations, ii) transport of animals, meat processing and packaging, and iii) deforestation of the amazon and other forests for animal feed, breaching the Paris Agreement Net Zero commitments. The recent case of *R (Finch) v Surrey County Council [2024] UKSC 20* confirmed that scope 3 downstream emissions should be evaluated for large development projects. They ruled that indirect emissions are within the scope of the **Environmental Impact Assessment** (EIA) required by law.

Both upstream and downstream 'scope 3' greenhouse gas emissions must be assessed at the EIA stage of planned developments, which in the case of factory farming includes the significant indirect emissions from feed crops, such as soy. The judge ruled that the existence of other regimes, like the Environment Agency’s environment permit, does not remove the obligation to assess the impact in the EIA.

Is the Council satisfied that these assessments presented by the applicant are robust in light of these legal requirements?

**Deforestation.**

Forests worldwide may be negatively impacted since animal feed is linked to deforestation. UK reforestation schemes pale into insignificance when compared to the 7.9 million hectares of forest cleared for soy cultivation between 2002 and 2015.[[52]](#footnote-52) A recent report found 60,000ha of recent soy driven deforestation in the Amazon and Cerrado. [[53]](#footnote-53) 90% of global soy is fed to animals for meat and dairy production,[[54]](#footnote-54) and over one-third (37%) of global soy is fed to chickens and other poultry, 20% to pigs, and 6% to aquaculture.[[55]](#footnote-55)

**Economic Impacts**

Large-scale factory farms can undermine local, sustainable farming practices and negatively impact local economies. Government documents show that the average pig or poultry farm employs just 2 people. [[56]](#footnote-56)

Any local tourism may be adversely affected by the noise, visual impact and odours associated with modern intensive farming units.

The Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation estimates factory farms cost taxpayers over £1.2 billion per year.

*“This report quantifies the hidden costs of pig and poultry factory farms to the British taxpayer – using publicly-available UK Government data, as well as an original survey of 1,000 UK residents. We estimate the total amount of the costs to be over £1.2 billion annually.*

*This includes:*

*1. Subsidies: We estimate 85% of subsidies that go to chicken and pig farmers are consumed by factory farms, amounting to £269M a year.*

*2. Environmental Pollution: The cost of air and water pollution from factory farms is estimated to be £518M.*

*3. Public Health Problems: The cost of increased respiratory deaths attributable to living near large factory farms is estimated at £92M.*

*4. Lost Farming Jobs: We estimate that factory farms have destroyed 14,000 farming jobs with annual salaries not paid valued at £333M. Furthermore, we find little evidence that factory farms make products significantly cheaper, nor that they increase food security. On the contrary, there is no clear pattern of more industrialised animal products getting cheaper than less industrialised products. Moreover, the vast amount of feed that livestock require means that increasing UK meat production means we import more food – not less. Factory farms have failed to make our food cheaper, failed to improve our food security, soaked up taxpayer money through subsidies, imposed significant costs to the environment and public health, and destroyed thousands of farming jobs.”* [[57]](#footnote-57)Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation Report

**Food Security**

In a live poll at the Global Food Security Conference (GFSC) to rank the most effective food systems solutions, shifting to plant-based food systems came second only to closing the yield gap.[[58]](#footnote-58)

The United Kingdom imports 84% of its fruit and 47% of its vegetables (down from 63% in 2003).[[59]](#footnote-59)

Allowing more animal farms will not help increase food security.

**Animals**

In the UK, one billion land animals are slaughtered each year. While the number of wild aquatic animals killed for food is in the trillions,[[60]](#footnote-60) farmers now also raise and slaughter some 77 million fish in the UK each year.[[61]](#footnote-61)

We would be rightly horrified if dogs or cats were treated the way animals farmed for food are.

Over 85% of animals are raised on cramped, intensive farms.[[62]](#footnote-62) Animals are: crammed together in huge numbers, unable to behave naturally, often mutilated without anaesthetic, removed from parents at an early age, and irsgenetically manipulated for yield not health, and thus are often stressed.

Mutilations like beak-trimming, teeth clipping and tail docking are regularly used, usually with no anaesthetic or pain relief, to prevent injuries caused by the overcrowding. According to UK law, tail docking must only be used when other methods to prevent tail biting, such as enrichment, have been unsuccessful. However, the AHDB reported that routine tail docking was carried out on 72% of UK pigs.[[63]](#footnote-63)

To ensure a ‘high yield for low cost’, animals are bred to grow unnaturally large in a short time, placing tremendous strain on their bones and organs.

Stress, illness and infectious diseases are often the result of intensive farm conditions.

*“Stressed animals can’t fight diseases well. When a pathogen challenges a healthy immune system, the body responds with inflammation to fight it. But when an animal is stressed, the hormone cortisol is released. This causes the normal inflammatory response to change into a more*[*limited activation of white blood cells*](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/10815731_Immunity_and_mastitis_Some_new_ideas_for_an_old_disease)*. And this allows new pathogens to survive and multiply.”* [[64]](#footnote-64)

Whilst some do not consider animal welfare to be in of itself a material consideration, it should certainly be a moral one. In addition, the crowded environments of factory farms increase the health risks to people via zoonoses, antibiotic use and pollution, as we have already seen.

**Conclusion**

For all of the reasons above I implore you to think carefully and take into account the people you represent and those most affected by this development and reject this application.

Name

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