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Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Ynni, Cynllunio a Materion Gwledig  
Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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Simon Thomas AM

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Dear Simon

Following your question in Plenary on 21 March regarding intensive poultry units and the planning system, I have now received advice on the matter.

National planning policy, in Planning Policy Wales (PPW), provides both strong protection for the environment and the public while allowing our agricultural industry to develop and remain viable. PPW does not currently distinguish between sizes of agricultural unit, or the different material considerations which are taken into account in each planning application.

It is for Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to determine planning applications in accordance with the Local Development Plan (LDP) unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The LDP provides the opportunity to comprehensively consider in-combination or cumulative effects. When determining applications, LPAs should consider factors such as noise, smells, pollution and health, as well as any in-combination or cumulative effects. LPAs need to ensure they have access to sufficient expertise to consider the effects of development and where they do not have this in-house, I expect them to acquire it from other LPAs or purchase it from external suppliers.

Given the increasing construction of these developments, I have asked my Chief Planner to issue a letter to LPAs. The letter will advise about the need to exercise particular care when considering planning applications which bring livestock units and residential or sensitive environmental areas close together. It will also remind LPAs, where necessary, to take into account the cumulative impacts resulting from similar developments nearby. The letter provides the opportunity to invite authorities to contribute to work looking at how cumulative analysis of nitrate and ammonia emissions can be better assessed.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The planning system does not operate in isolation and should complement other regulatory regimes to ensure satisfactory environmental protection for the life of the development. Such legislation applying to sites include environmental permitting controls, biosecurity requirements, controls over the storage of slurry as well as a number of management measures relating to designations, such as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones. I am keen to ensure, where regimes do overlap, appropriate co-ordination is maintained both for the benefit of the poultry industry and the environment, including human health. I have asked officials to explore whether better alignment can be achieved.

Regards  
Lesley

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