

---

**From:** Environmental Health  
**Sent:** 26 November 2024 16:51  
**To:** Development Control  
**Cc:** Nick Hayhurst  
**Subject:** PLANNING APP 4/24/2152/0F1 - HILL FARM, HOLMROOK

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Retrospective erection of a building to house cattle.

Thank you for the above planning consultation.

Environmental Health are grateful for the additional information, dated November 2024, submitted in support of this application and, in particular, the Odour Impact Assessment that was previously requested.

This, together with the supporting evidence, is accepted by Environmental Health.

Its conclusion, based on procedures laid out in the 'Guidance on the assessment of odour for planning' (IAQM, July 2018) is that local residential receptors will suffer a "slight adverse" odour impact from the agricultural activities at Hill Farm.

Since the start of 2024, Environmental Health have received 32 x complaints from local residents about alleged detriment to amenity from Hill Farm.

The complaints have mainly been about agricultural odours, but also other issues such as noise, dust, bonfires, vermin and light pollution.

No formal enforcement was necessary though ongoing helpful dialogue with the farmer has been made.

Farm odours can arise from a range of agricultural activities and involve a cocktail of different gases that can act / interact in many ways.

Farm odours can be short-lived, weather-influenced, and be perceived differently by individual receptors.

Some residents have provided farm odour observational monitoring forms to Environmental Health over the past months.

Intense, unpleasant farm odours were reported on a regular basis in the spring and summer months.

Whilst Environmental Health staff have made many monitoring visits during this time, excessive farm odours were not witnessed.

As an intensive beef farm, one of the main gases from Hill Farm may be ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) associated with the housing of livestock in the cattle sheds and the subsequent storage and dispersal of cattle manure and bedding .

In order to provide some empirical data, Environmental Health have conducted ambient air quality monitoring by passive diffusion tubes of gaseous ammonia in Holmrook over the period June – October 2024, as part of the UK Local Air Quality Monitoring programme.

Two local residential sites were chosen as the monitoring points around Hill Farm, although the diffusion tubes will have also picked up general gaseous ammonia from the wider locality.

The results are therefore presented as an average monthly mean total of gaseous ammonia in the air.

The highest concentration of ammonia in local air was recorded in June 2024 (monitoring period 05.06.24 – 03.07.24) with a total of 27.36 ug/m<sup>3</sup> / 38.58 ppb / 0.03858 ppm.

To put this figure into context, the threshold of odour detection of ammonia in humans is 0.037 ppm.

The HSE has put workplace exposure limits to ammonia at 25 ppm (over 8 hours) and at 35 ppm (over 15 minutes).

The concentration of ammonia in local air during June 2024 will have peaked and troughed around the monthly mean, but the general indication is that whilst the odour of ammonia will have been constantly perceived by residents around Hill Farm, the levels were not necessarily excessively high.

However, Environmental Health does acknowledge that ammonia levels in air can be intermittent and very short lived in dry weather conditions, that the gas is highly soluble and denser in wet / humid conditions and also be more noticeable at night when relative humidity increases.

For a period from 29.08.24 – 03.10.24 Environmental Health sited a portable gas detector around Hill Farm to monitor for ammonia and hydrogen sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S). The portable gas detector was placed in several dwellings around Hill Farm during this period and left to data log for each respective gas.

No levels above 1 ppm were detected.

To this end, evidence from the qualitative and quantitative monitoring would indicate that the effect from farm odours at Hill Farm may be presently deemed 'slight adverse'.

The cooler, wetter weather over the summer period may have played a role but, regardless of this, Environmental Health must conclude that it has no objection to this development.

Advice from the Environment Agency in their response dated 19.11.24 is helpful, and Environmental Health would continue to respond and work with residents and the farm alike should further complaints arise.

Regards

Environmental Health

Public Health & Protection | Cumberland Council

Whitehaven Commercial Park, Moresby Parks, Whitehaven, Cumbria, CA28 8YD

T. 0300 373 3730

[cumberland.gov.uk](https://cumberland.gov.uk)

