

Farmer seeks permission for underpass for chickens

An underpass for chickens to cross the road is to be built by a free range egg farm if plans get the go-ahead.

Proposals for the tunnel have been lodged with the local council by East Lothian Eggs Limited so hens can have a wander on either side of a 60mph road.

The company which is based at Howden Farm, near Gifford, was last year given the go ahead to double its flock from 32,000 chickens to 64,000 by adding a new shed.

But the farm needed to find a way for them to cross a country road to allow them enough space to roam.

In the application to East Lothian Council, their planning consultants Cogeo said the farm needed to provide a minimum ranging area of land outside the sheds.

They said: " The underpass is required to allow free-range birds access to the additional ranging area adjacent to the operational site, north of the B6368."

A road safety report on the plans said the underpass would be used by the chickens to roam on either side of the 60mph rural road and would have openings which would be 2.5 metres wide and 1.5 metres high.

Last November the egg farm was given the go ahead to expand its flock after they told councillors local farmers were

desperate to get their hands on their by product – chicken poop.

Michael Scott, from East Lothian Eggs, told a meeting of the council's planning committee at the time that the flock would produce 1,500 tonnes of manure which would be dried down into around 500 tonnes of chicken litter.

He said: "It will be exported to other farms locally.

"Everyone is desperate for it. The price of man-made fertiliser has gone through the roof and this is probably going to be the next best thing going forward."

Councillors unanimously backed the expansion.

by Marie Sharp, Local Democracy Reporter.

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