AKC Office
CDL Business Park
Lower Road
Erlestoke
Devizes
Wiltshire
SN10 5UE

T: 01380 724687
E: info@akcagric.co.uk
www.akcagric.co.uk

All Oaks Farm
Heddington
Calne
SP11 0PF

Our ref: L Cowlard Planning Statement

Your ref: Agricultural Planning/ Justification Statement

Date: 7th March 2024

Dear Sirs,

Ref. Functional & Financial Need – Ag Dwelling Appraisal

Following the meeting at All Oaks Farm on 1st March 2024 with Luke Cowlard & AKC, I am pleased to reply with planning statement with reference to Agricultural justification for functional & financial need.

In the context of the application for the proposed dwelling, paragraph 55 of the NPPF states:

"Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside".

At the site meeting on the 1st March it was evident that the current dwelling/ structure on site is appropriate to the size and scope of the holding as a smallholding for Agriculture, albeit is temporary in nature. The existing footprint does not include permanent fixtures and enables the family to start their proposed business.

Proposed Business

The agricultural business in question currently has;-

Pigs (3)
Sheep (2)
Goats (12)/Kids (4)
Ducks (9)
Geese (4)
Laying Chickens (46)
Breeding Chicks (90)
Cockerels (45)

The idea is to rear, grow and produce a variety of local produce through local outlets and online sales. The relatively small nature operation of the business integrates animals produced with good husbandry, with a view of adding value to commodities.

The Farm is registered with Animal Health, has a CPH Number and has protocols in place to deal with vaccination & animal welfare. Support is provided from Andi Whitcombe at NFU, further supporting the functional & financial need for this rural dwelling, in the form of a letter. The business has also obtained NFU membership.

Accounts are not yet available for the business but accounts are in the process of being produced for the current financial year.

Reviewing the existing operation in question, investments have been made in enclosures, incubators & water infrastructure to enable a production system to be setup. Sales are established an the operation allows Luke and family to setup and run their own smallholding within the local economy.

Turnover is budgeted at for the current financial year. Although these sales are reasonable and well established, there will be a requirement to double this into 2024/ 2025 to justify a commercial return & 1 x FTE on site. The current plan is to double the number of laying & Breeding chicks- target sales to this effect will be

Once fixed costs such as Insurance, water, rates & repairs have been taken into account (Est. , this will leave a margin of from which Luke can support his family and sustain his business.

Functional Need;-

Daily activities for the farming business.

AM.
. Check incubators are running correctly. Approximately 5 minutes.

. Feed and water baby chicks, do health check and visual checks. Inspect heat lamps are running correctly. Approximately 35 minutes.

. Clean all waters and replace with fresh drinking water, approximately 45 minutes.

. Put feed in for all poultry, ducks and geese, approximately 45 minutes.

. Open and let out all poultry, ducks and geese, inspect all birds for daily health check, watching and monitoring. Any signs of illness, birds are brought in and checked fully over. Approximately 45- 60 minutes.

. Hay and feed for all goats and sheep, approximately 35-45 minutes.

. Fresh drinking water. Approximately 5-15 minutes.

. Inspection of all goats, pregnant does are monitored and fully checked over. Does with kid at foot are fully checked along with kids. Approximately 45-60 minutes.

Midday PM.

. Clean out two/three animal huts, this is done as there are sixteen to do so two/ three daily to keep on a weekly rotation of cleaning. Approximately 2-3 hours.

. Afternoon feed and water. Approximately 45 minutes.

. Egg collection. Approximately 20 minutes.

. Visaul inspection of all livestock. 25-45 minutes.

Evening PM.

.Check all poultry, ducks and geese are away, shut all coops and secure all feeders and waters. Approximately 45 minutes.

. Check all goats over for bed, inspect all pregnant does and does with kid at foot. Approximately 35 minutes.

From my Huawei Notepad

Recommendations & Support

Luke & his family are making a good effort to establish an agricultural business with quality local produce in mind. There are a wide variety of species and products, which bodes well for the future. In order to fulfil the financial need, the business will need to increase output from the laying/ rearing enterprise, which it plans to do.

The functional need is demonstrated through the aforementioned daily routine carried out on site. This will increase further with higher sales of poultry/ eggs.

I would recommend that the business incorporates and completes accounts for the forthcoming financial year. I would also suggest full membership to supporting industry organisations (AHDB)/ Farming Advice Service would be appropriate for ongoing support and point of reference for advice.

My view in this case is that the functional and financial test highlighted in the NPPF will be met at All Oaks Farm within the next 12 months'. I would endorse that Luke & family are supported in achieving this objective from relevant authorities. To achieve this, Luke will need to show continual commitment to the business over this next 12 months.

I will be pleased to discuss any aspects of this statement with Luke & family in addition to other relevant authorities.

Yours Sincerely,

James Berry (AKC Partner/ Consultant)