

The **Farm Consultancy** Group



ASSESSMENT OF NEED FOR AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS AND ESSENTIAL NEED FOR A RURAL WORKERS DWELLING

at

Wyre Farm, Worton

Prepared for:

J R Bodman Limited

April 2025

Contents

Contents.....	2
1. Introduction.....	3
2. Background Information.....	3
3. The Proposal	4
4. Planning Policy.....	4
5. Financial Viability of the Unit.....	6
6. Buildings at the Site.....	6
7. Machinery.....	7
8. Functional Test.....	7
9. Proper Functioning.....	8
10.Current Business Achievements and Intentions for the future	9
11.Availability of other Houses.....	9
12. Conclusion.....	10

Appendix One – Map of the Farm

1. Introduction

This report has been prepared by George Drewett of *The Farm Consultancy Group* on behalf of J R Bodman to confirm agricultural justification for two agricultural buildings and a rural worker's dwelling to be constructed at Whyr Farm, Worton.

The report is produced based on information provided by the client, farm records and standard costings data where appropriate.

Whyr Farm, Worton was purchased in 2024 by J R Bodman and is managed in combination with other land in the area.

The business has historically run a pig and arable enterprise, with the majority of the grain fed to the pig enterprise and manure applied back onto the arable land. Recently the business has invested in a cattle enterprise, this has been running on rented land with associated buildings for winter housing at Crookwood Farm. The proposal is to transfer the majority of these animals to the Whyr Farm, Worton once planning permission has been successfully granted, some older stock that require less attention will remain at Whyr Farm.

2. Background

The business started in 1988 on a Greenfield Site at Windsmere Farm, Worton. The only enterprise at this site is pigs and this was built up to a 400-sow unit which is the maximum capacity for the land area. The family could not find any local land to purchase to expand the pig enterprise further, and decided in 2010 to purchase South Park Farm (27 miles away). This site has now been significantly expanded to provide a successful and profitable pig enterprise. In addition to this there is also a substantial arable enterprise and a horse livery enterprise located at this site.

Over the last 8 years the business has been renting Whyr Farm (64 acres) in Worton and has now successfully purchased this. The land has generally been cropped with cereals but yields have been poor especially in recent years due to the heavy soil type and wet winters. The business now farms approximately 300 acres, with the majority of the land owned.

Helen and James Bodman are the directors and shareholders of J R Bodman. They have 2 children with their youngest, Joe, showing a keen interest in farming. Joe has management control of the beef enterprise, and this is an area the business would like to expand under Joe's direction.

Appendix One shows a map of the farmland that is owned.

3. The Proposal

The proposal is to construct the necessary storage and livestock housing at Whyr Farm to accommodate 100 suckler animals plus calves to weaning, and 200 youngstock from 0 – 12 months and a minimum of 90 animals from 12-24 months of age. Beef production is a profitable enterprise and the soil type at the site would be best suited to grass / forage production that will fit well with a beef enterprise. The alternative to beef production on the site would be to build a solar farm on the land.

In addition to this the site would require a mobile home to accommodate Joe Bodman to enable the onsite functional requirement. There will be a parking area to the front of the property, and access through the existing entrance off Worton Road (very close to the main road). There will be plenty of turning space, so that vehicles can join the highway in a forward moving gear. There is good visibility from the farm entrance and sufficient sized access for large vehicles.

Siting

The proposal makes use of an existing entrance, to avoid removing any hedge or creating additional access points. The site is concealed from view by the main village and surrounding area and is a reasonable distance from neighbours.

The location of the buildings and mobile home has been arrived at through careful consideration and is deemed to be the best option in terms of providing support to the cattle enterprise. It is important to note that the other two sites (South Park Farm and Windsmere) cannot accommodate cattle due to the biosecurity restrictions of pigs on the site.

4. Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Frameworks (NPPF) (published December 2023) outlines that planning policies should support sustainable economic growth in rural areas by taking a positive approach to rural development.

Planning strategies should maintain a prosperous rural economy including policies to support the sustainable growth of rural businesses. They should promote the development and diversification of

agricultural businesses and support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit rural businesses, communities and visitors which respect the character of the countryside.

Paragraph 84 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should avoid isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as:

a) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;

In the county of Wiltshire, the Wiltshire Core Strategy runs alongside the NPPF; the core strategy outlines a sustainable spatial strategy for future development in the county.

However, neither the WCS policy nor its supporting text prescribe precisely what the financial and functional evidence must demonstrate, CP 48 only requires the dwelling to be *'in the interests of'* employment essential to the countryside and the NPPF reference simply states an *'essential need to live permanently at their place of work'* with notably no reference at all to financial evidence. All previous policy guidance in this respect has been cancelled and this has been tested on appeal, such that these more prescribed tests no longer apply.

Nonetheless, in considering 'need', it is appropriate to have regard to:

'Essential need/ in the interests of' – meaning an agricultural requirement for someone to reside on the site to be available at most times, which can reasonably equate to the requirement for at least one full-time agricultural worker, tending to livestock who require on-hand attention round the clock. It is also reasonable to consider whether this need can be fulfilled by any existing dwelling.

Secondly, in looking at the requirement for financial evidence, it would seem reasonable that it ought to be demonstrated that the agricultural business, is planned on a sound financial basis and there is at least a reasonable prospect of it remaining so, such that the business is likely to remain or become sustainable.

5. Financial viability of the unit

J R Bodman have been running a successful business to date with sufficient profits to cover the required drawings and reinvestment within the business.

Overhead and expenses have been calculated based on historic figures and predicted future costs.

6. Buildings at the Site

There is a housing requirement at Whyr Farm based on the below livestock. The table below details the space requirement for 2,048 m² of livestock housing.

		Building requirement per head (m ²)	Total Building requirement (m ²)
Sucklers	100	8	800
Calf Rearing (0 - 6m)	100	3	300
Calf Rearing (6 - 12m)	100	4	400
Bulls	1	8	8
Youngstock 12-24m	90	6	540
Total Building requirement (m²)			2048

The proposed plans would include the construction of one storage building measuring 50m x 30m (1,500m²) and a livestock building 70m x 30m (2,100m²). In addition to this there will be concrete / hardstanding yard area available also. Any surplus building space will be used for fodder, machinery and straw storage.

It is proposed that the mobile home will be situated on the west side of the buildings. This will provide visibility over the site, preventing the need to drive through the farmyard to access the property, improving biosecurity and also reducing the risk of accidents in the farmyard.

7. Machinery

The business owns a machinery fleet. Contractors are used for silage making, but otherwise all other operations are carried out in house.

8. Functional Test

All figures for labour requirements have been obtained from 'The Agricultural Budget and Costings Book – 97th Edition' (2024) by Agro Business Consultants.

Once the buildings have been constructed and the mobile home is in place, cattle numbers will be increased so that the labour requirement at the site will be as follows:

	Numbers of animals	Standard Man-Days required (per animal/ per ha)	Enterprise Total
Sucklers	100	2.25	225
Calf Rearing (0 - 6m)	100	1.63	163
Calf Rearing (6 - 12m)	100	0.81	81
Bulls	1	2.25	2.25
Youngstock 12-24m	90	1.75	157.5
Total Enterprise Requirement			628.75
		Standard Man Days provided by 1 Person	275
		Total labour requirement	2.29

A labour unit of one person is assumed to work 2,200 hours per year. These total hours are converted into 275 notional 'Standard Man Days' of 8 hours (ABC, 2022). PPS7 is no longer a material consideration, however, to assist the Council in their decision making the statement required an enterprise to show an essential need for the proper functioning of the enterprise for at least one rural worker to be readily available on site at most times. Paragraph 4 (i) of Annex A referred to the example of animals requiring essential care at short notice, and in 4 (ii) to the ability to deal quickly with emergencies that could otherwise cause serious loss.

The proper functioning of a livestock farm requires that skilled stock attendants are available at very short notice at any time of the day or night.

9. Proper Functioning

The Sucklers calve all year round resulting in a number of young calves born on the unit throughout the year.

The cattle due to calve and all youngstock require close supervision at all times. This identifies that there is an essential need for someone to be available on site all year round.

Farm Assurance Codes of Practice require that suitable trained persons are available 24 hours a day and the Government's Strategy for Food and Farming states that 'high standards of animal health and welfare are important because they are a vital part of producing safe food and because we care about how animals are treated'. High standards are also essential for the economic success of this enterprise and the wider industry.

Appropriately skilled workers will need to be living on site to be available at short notice to manage the animals' health and welfare. The Code of Recommendation for the Welfare of Livestock (Cattle) states that 'no matter how acceptable a system may be in principle, without competent, diligent stockmanship, the welfare of animals cannot be adequately catered for.'

One of the principal reasons to support the need for a permanent dwelling to be situated permanently on site is to continuously monitor animals when they are giving birth, and to foster young onto mothers whilst observing the young to check they are healthy.

It is important to be able to spot stress in calves, as the change in feeding system, transportation and change of environment from the farm they are purchased from to Whyr Field Farm can cause issues. It will prove vital that all housed calves are regularly inspected and monitored as their welfare depends on

frequent human attention. Calves are susceptible to a number of health problems that require rapid attention such as viral diseases, pneumonia, bloat and scour, all of which need to be detected early and immediately treated if losses are to be avoided. The Code of Recommendation for the Welfare of Livestock (Cattle) states that 'it is particularly important that you watch calves regularly for signs of scours or respiratory disease.'

The Welfare of Farmed Animal Regulations stress that animals which appear to be ill or injured shall be cared for appropriately without delay and that action should be taken immediately if any animals are injured or appear ill or distressed. From a financial perspective it is also vital to the success of the business that any losses and health issues are kept to an absolute minimum. Adequate and timely supervision at all times is therefore essential.

10. Current Business Achievements and Intentions for the Future.

To date, the Bodman Family have created a sustainable agricultural business. This has taken a number of years and great dedication. Joe Bodman will have support from his experienced family and his enthusiasm is integral to the successful running of the business and the expansion of the farming enterprise. Joe must be living on site to successfully expand this enterprise and enable a smooth transition of the business from one site to another.

The build cost of the proposed buildings and purchase of the mobile home be financed through available capital within the business. If however, there was a borrowing requirement of £350,000 at 7% interest over 25 years, this creates a finance and interest repayment cost of £35,000 per annum. There will be no need to borrow any funds to carry out the build, however the business is financially sound and could support the borrowing required to fund this development.

11. Availability of Other Houses

There is no dwelling at the site and there are no houses within a suitable distance offered for sale or rent. There is a requirement to live on site to manage the functional requirements of the farm.

There is a requirement for someone to be available on site 24 hours a day and a dwelling in a nearby settlement would not satisfy this functional need.

The proposed dwelling will have an agricultural tie and will be located in close proximity to the livestock buildings. If the farm business was sold in the future, there would be a functional

requirement for this dwelling. The holding is of a significant size and will always remain as a livestock farm, due to the building design and considerable investment that will be made. The overall business will continue to expand further, as it has done over previous years enabling continued viability in the future.

12. Conclusion

In conclusion; the Bodman family are a hardworking, progressive and conscientious family who have built up a successful business over many years. The profits on the enclosed accounts detail the business is stable now and will be in the future.

There is a fundamental need to build a separate site away from the two existing pig units for the expansion of a cattle enterprise. Whyr farm is available and owned by the business and provides a platform to graze the sucklers. Once there is livestock housing available this will enable winter housing of the sucklers and youngstock housing throughout the year.

There will be a need for Joe to live within close proximity of the cattle, to carry out the 24-hour on call management, as this sector requires constant supervision. The business meets the financial and functional tests. This permission is integral to the future success of the business.



