Further Information In Support Of Application

1. Introduction

This report is in support of an application for the provision of a permanent agricultural dwelling at Bird Lane House Farm, Oxspring.

The basic need for provision of a dwelling has arisen due to changing circumstances within the owner's family. The operational responsibility for the running of the business has now passed to Mr M & Mrs A. Warttig, the son and daughter in law of the original owners. The original owners are no longer capable of physically running the operational side of the farm.

Although there are properties surrounding the farm, there is no existing farmhouse. Bird Lane House is owned by the applicants' parents.

2. Executive Summary

The farm extends to approximately 37 acres and is divided between wheat and barley crops and grassland for grazing and haylage. There are various buildings on the site.

The livestock numbers currently being reared on an annual basis are approximately 120 beef cattle, 20 suckler cow herd, 5000 turkeys and around 1000 chickens.

3. Financial appraisal

The business "Eastfield Turkeys" has been an established family business for three generations and the applicant has been key in the running of the business for around 20 years. The applicant has had sole ownership of the business for approximately 6 years. Over this time there has been considerable money invested: a new killing plant, new beef unit, 3 large refrigeration units and freezer unit. (Farm accounts and financial details can be viewed if required by the planning officer.) The buildings are also undergoing a schedule of improvements.

The profits from the business are used to pay labour and to re-invest in the farm.

4. Personnel

The farmer and his family provide the majority of the farm labour. Up until recently the applicant relied on his father, who lives in Bird Lane House, to be on hand in an emergency, but due to a heart attack last year his health no longer allows for this option. Extreme bad weather over the 2010/2011 winter, causing frozen and burst pipes and making access to the site very difficult, has served to highlight the need for someone to be permanently on site 24 hours a day.

The applicant also has students from Askham Graham and Bishop Burton agricultural colleges present at different times on the farm as part of their work experience.

The farmer's attendance is vital for the health and security of the livestock. The poultry is bought in as "day-olds" and the beef unit calves are less than 2 weeks old when they arrive. The cows that calf on the farm obviously also need close attention.

In addition to the care of livestock, the work on the farm includes the regular maintenance of building, machinery, land etc. The cereal crops grown need regular work and attention. Haylage and straw are also grown and produced by the applicant for his livestock.

5. Operations

Poultry rearing consists of chicks bought as "day-olds" and reared to maturity when they are slaughtered on site and sold to mainly local farm shops and butchers. Some of the poultry are sold part grown to smaller farms that finish the process themselves. The farm grows 5000 turkeys and 1000 chickens each year. The turkeys are mainly sold as fresh produce at Christmas, although there is always frozen produce on site that is mainly sold at the farm gate, a trade that could be maximised if the applicant lived on site.

The beef unit has grown considerably in 2009 and now houses 120+ bulls. The bulls are bought in as approximately 2 weeks old calves and are housed outside in individual hutches until 6-8 weeks. The calves are then put in groups of 5 or 6 and stay outside in small open pens until 5 months. They then go into the bull sheds in their groups. At every stage of the above process the animals have to be closely observed and monitored, as they can soon get ill from bullying or change in climate and then immediate action is required. Once bulls reach around 8-10 months they start to mature and can become aggressive, and it is particularly at this stage that they need to be closely looked after by the applicant himself.

At maturity, which can vary from 12 to 16 months, the bulls are taken to the local abattoir.

6. Summary

To summarize, the farm and the investment made by the applicant has established the site on Bird Lane as very much a long-term agricultural business. The farm needs the applicant to live on site to provide a continuous level of animal husbandry and general security for both livestock and farm equipment and buildings, not only from unwanted visitors but fire etc. In 1995 a turkey shed burnt down killing 6000 birds. Living on site increases overall safety for both the farmer and visitors, as situations change continuously on a busy working farm, and farms can prove to be very dangerous when not fully managed correctly.

There would appear to be an established functional need for provision of a permanent agricultural dwelling which relates to full time working. Although other buildings are present within the site none are available or indeed suitable for occupation.

Within the existing farm the siting is considered to be such that it meets a clearly identified functional need and is considered to be well related to the existing farm and surrounding buildings.

Planning requirements in regard of access to the site are already in place and the impact on the countryside is considered to be minimal.

Accounting information of this profitable long-established business is available on request from the applicants.

The business is economically viable and is considered to be a valued long-standing contributor to the local economy.