



acorus
planning & design

Dwellinghouse Appraisal

**Erection of an agricultural workers dwelling at
the proposed Poultry Farm, Gibbet Fen, Fen
Road, Donington, Spalding, PE11 4XE**

Prepared for:
Clarke Construction Group Ltd

September 2026

Prepared by:
James Whilding MRICS FASAg

JW/3168/0826



Acorus Rural Property Services Ltd (trading as Acorus)
Registered office: Agriculture House, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth CV8 2TZ
Registered in England No. 04514547



The
1908
Group

	Contents	1
1.0	Introduction	2
2.0	The Planning Policy Framework	3
3.0	The Farm Business	9
4.0	Poultry-Related Labour	11
5.0	Buildings and Fixed Equipment	12
6.0	Dwellings	12
7.0	Reason for the Application	12
8.0	Functional Need	13
9.0	Viable Business	19
10.0	Alternative Accommodation	20
11.0	Conclusion	22

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Clarke Construction Group Ltd has instructed Acorus Rural Property Services Ltd (Acorus) to seek planning permission for the provision of an agricultural workers dwelling at the proposed Poultry Farm at Gibbet Fen, Fen Road, Donington.
- 1.2 Acorus is a rural planning and design consultancy and part of The 1908 Group owned by the NFU. The author is James Whilding, a qualified Chartered Surveyor (MRICS) and Fellow of the Society of Agriculture (formerly the British Institute of Agricultural Consultants). As a rural planning consultant, he has been engaged by Defra, LPAs and private clients to advise on rural planning matters including agricultural dwellings, and this has been the case for more than 30 years. In relation to the poultry sector, he advises some of the main integrators in the UK, in addition to smaller scale private producers.
- 1.3 As members of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, Acorus has the necessary expertise to provide an opinion on the above application.
- 1.4 This is a resubmission following the refusal by South Holland District Council (reference H04-1282-25) dated 23rd July 2026 for the following reason:
- 1 The proposed dwelling, by virtue of its location within the open countryside, represents isolated residential development. Paragraph 84(a) of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) requires that such development should only be permitted where there is an essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work.
- 1.5 Whilst the Local Planning Authority (LPA) acknowledged that the supporting appraisal demonstrated a functional need for a worker to be readily available to the poultry enterprise, the need was not considered essential such that it necessitated permanent on-site residence.

- 1.6 The LPA referred to insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the identified operational requirements could not reasonably be met through alternative arrangements, including accommodation within the locality, or that a temporary dwelling would not be a more appropriate mechanism to establish need in the context of a newly approved enterprise.
- 1.7 It is noted that the application was referred to the planning committee and. Whilst there appeared to be support for on-site accommodation, members were concerned that the dwelling was granted without any poultry buildings have been erected. Evidence within this report will show the developing progressing as planned.
- 1.8 Since the determination of the application, the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been issued (August 2026). The Framework sets out the Government's policies for plan-making and decision-making in England. It is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and its national policies should be read alongside the policies contained within the Development Plan. Where there is inconsistency between the two, the development plan policies should be afforded very limited weight, with the national decision-making policies therefore taking precedence in the decision-making process. Relevant policies are detailed in the following chapter.

2.0 THE PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

- 2.1.1 Key policies of note are as follows:
- 2.1.2 Paragraph 17 of the NPPF identifies three overarching objectives to sustainable development, which are interdependent and should be pursued in mutually supportive ways:

1. An economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
2. A social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible community facilities, public service infrastructure and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
3. An environmental objective – to support efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy; and to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, and minimising waste and pollution.

2.1.3 Policy S5 relates to the principle of development outside settlements and identifies agriculture as a form of development which should be approved outside settlements unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects when assessed against the national decision-making policies within the NPPF.

S5: Principle of development outside settlements

Only certain forms of development should be approved outside settlements, as set out in the following list. These should be approved, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework:

- a. Development for: agriculture, horticulture and forestry; outdoor sport and recreation; allotments; cemeteries and burial grounds; mineral extraction and processing; engineering operations and infrastructure (including for transport, energy, water and telecommunications); roadside facilities in accordance with policy TR5; national defence and security; or which is solely for nature conservation, restoration and/or enhancement;
- b. Development for rural businesses and services, including tourism, where a location outside settlements is shown to be necessary;

2.1.4 Policy E2 relates to meeting the need for business land and premises. Sub-paragraph 1(b) requires substantial weight to be given to demonstrated benefits for domestic food production, animal welfare and/or the environment arising from proposals for farm and agricultural development.

E2: Meeting the need for business land and premises

1. To support business growth, substantial weight should be given to:
 - a) The economic benefits of proposals for commercial development which allow businesses to invest, expand and/or adapt; especially where this would support the economic vision and strategy for the area, the implementation of the Industrial Strategy, support improvements in freight and logistics and/or reflect proposals for Industrial Strategy Zones and AI Growth Zones; and
 - b) Benefits for domestic food production, animal welfare and/or the environment which can be demonstrated through proposals for development for farm and agricultural modernisation.

2.1.5 Policy E4 relates specifically to rural business development. Sub-paragraph 1(b) supports the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based businesses. Sub-paragraph 1(d) supports development to maintain and enhance farm viability and sustainability. This includes development supporting domestic food production and improved accommodation for livestock.



Point 2 of the policy also recognises that rural business development may need to be located outside settlements and in rural locations which are not well served by public transport.

E4: Rural business development

1. In applying policy E2, the sustainable growth of businesses in rural areas should be supported, including through:
 - a) The conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
 - b) The development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based businesses;
 - c) Facilities to support rural leisure and tourism and measures to retain and expand accessible local shops and services; and
 - d) Development to maintain and enhance farm viability and sustainability and support domestic food production, such as improved accommodation for livestock, on-farm reservoirs, greenhouses, polytunnels, farm shops and temporary accommodation for seasonal workers (where this accommodation is ancillary to the agricultural use and not for permanent occupation).
2. Development proposals to meet business needs in rural areas may need to be located outside settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances:
 - a) Development proposals should take opportunities, where they exist, to use previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing development; and
 - b) The siting and design of development should be appropriate having regard to the character of its surroundings."

- 2.1.6 S5 paragraph 3 states that development proposals comprising isolated homes, which are those lying outside settlements or groups of houses, should not be approved other than in accordance with policy HO11, the details of which are as follows.



HO11: Isolated homes in the countryside

1. Development proposals for isolated homes in the countryside should only be supported where one or more of the following circumstances apply:
 - 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;
 - b. The development would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets in accordance with policy HE4;
 - c. The development would reuse a redundant or disused building and enhance its immediate setting, including proposals which would secure the long-term reuse of a vacant or underused listed building (subject to taking into account any harm to its significance, as set out in policy HE6);
 - d. The development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential building; or
 - e. The design is of exceptional quality, in that it:
 - i. Is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and
 - ii. Would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

2.2 GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE

2.2.1 On 22nd July 2019, the Government introduced guidance under the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) as to how the need for isolated homes in the countryside for essential rural workers can be assessed when considering the NPPF. Noting the recent re-draft of the NPPF, the following guidance could be considered out of date (and may be revised shortly) although the comments largely align with HO11 above. Considerations could include the following:

- evidence of the necessity for a rural worker to live at, or in close proximity to, their place of work to ensure the effective operation of an agricultural, forestry or similar land-based rural enterprise (for instance, where farm animals or agricultural processes require on-site attention 24-hours a day and where otherwise there would be a risk to human or animal health or from crime, or to deal quickly with emergencies that could cause serious loss of crops or products);



- the degree to which there is confidence that the enterprise will remain viable for the foreseeable future;
- whether the provision of an additional dwelling on site is essential for the continued viability of a farming business through the farm succession process;
- whether the need could be met through improvements to existing accommodation on the site, providing such improvements are appropriate taking into account their scale, appearance and the local context; and
- in the case of new enterprises, whether it is appropriate to consider granting permission for a temporary dwelling for a trial period.

Employment on an assembly or food packaging line, or the need to accommodate seasonal workers will generally not be sufficient to justify building isolated rural dwellings.

2.2.2 With overwhelming policy support in the NPPF for development to maintain and enhance farm viability and sustainability and support domestic food production, the provision of on-site accommodation for key farm workers should LPA level likewise be supported and approval granted.

2.3 LOCAL PLAN

2.3.1 In the previous application, the following Development Plan policies from the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan, March 2019 were considered relevant:

- 01 Spatial Strategy
- 02 Development Management
- 03 Design of New Development
- 04 Approach to Flood Risk
- 28 The Natural Environment
- 29 The Historic Environment
- 30 Pollution
- 36 Vehicle and Cycle Parking

- 2.3.2 With decision-making policies being contained in the NPPF, question is raised as to the importance and relevance of the aforementioned Development Plan policies.

3.0 THE FARM BUSINESS

3.1 General Information

- 3.1.1 The applicant is Wray Farm, a 4th generation family farm that has been operational for over 100 years. The holding is owner-occupied and consists of arable cropping, including wheat, peas, beans, potatoes, cabbage, millet, barley and grass. The business has previously diversified with the provision of an equine retirement livery and 100 acres to a ground mounted solar scheme.
- 3.1.2 The business employs 5 people full time in addition to 2 family members with additional seasonal workers as required. and have extra workers seasonally or as required.
- 3.1.3 With market volatility and climatic issues, the business has been keen to identify other sources of income to support and maintain this established family farm. On 6th October 2022, planning permission was gained under reference H04-0130-22 for the erection of 6 No. poultry houses and associated infrastructure. Construction works are progressing well as shown below (source: Clarke Construction Group Ltd - September 2026). Completion is planned for the end of 2026.



- 3.1.4 Unlike other agricultural sectors, there is sustained demand for UK chicken with growth of 3-5% year on year. With food tariffs and prices, food security and reducing food miles, the efficient volume production of quality UK bred and reared chickens has become a clear driver for the poultry industry. In addition, due to the implementation of higher welfare standards and reduced stocking rates being imposed by the supermarkets, the sector needs 20% more floorspace to meet current production levels.
- 3.1.5 Once completed, the site will be rented by AREIL and operated by 2Agriculture Limited, all part of the Boparan Group. The business operates around 255 poultry farms nationally and rents a further 50-60 units. The enterprise will create two full-time and additional part-time jobs locally, and employed by the tenant who will also utilise contractors and suppliers in the region. This supports the rural economy, in addition to protecting and supporting the existing family farm.
- 3.1.6 The unit will be operational potentially from 2027 and operated under a 15 year Farm Business Tenancy. This confidential document can be made available to the LPA upon request.

3.2 Stocking

- 3.2.1 As noted in the previous application, the proposal is for broiler (chicken meat) production whereby chicks will be placed within the buildings as day olds and finished birds removed at around day 39. A further 7-10 days at the end of each cycle will be required for cleanout and preparation of the buildings for the incoming flock. Finished birds will be sent for processing. On average, there will be around 7 completed crops per annum.
- 3.2.2 Based on the above, each crop will produce around 330,000 birds. Based on 7 completed crops per annum, total annual output will therefore be approximately 2,310,000 birds. At the end of each crop, the birds are transferred off the holding for processing and then onto major supermarket chains and restaurants.



4.0 POULTRY RELATED LABOUR

- 4.1 The requirement on the new unit is based on two full-time workers (a site manager and assistant manager) and two part-time workers. For the full time staff, they will be contracted to work a 46 hour week.
- 4.2 This is a 24 hour a day, 365 days a year operation where there needs to be a continual presence and support on hand to deal with issues which may occur on the site at any time, day and night. Without the staff presence on site, the business would fail to run effectively.
- 4.3 To understand more clearly the labour need on the holding for a new enterprise in particular, a theoretical labour calculation is prepared based on standard labour days (SLDs) and amended where necessary to reflect local variance. It provides a general estimate of the holding's farm labour requirement with a standard man year equivalent to 2,200 hours (275 days). This is based on a 45 week year of 39 hours per week after holidays, illness etc. having been deducted plus an average of 10 hours overtime per week. Note the SPD refers to a 37 hour working week.
- 4.4 The following labour calculations are based on standard data quoted in the John Nix Farm Management Pocket book 56th Edition and the Agricultural Budgeting and Costing Book (ABC – 101st Edition November 2025) and relate to the prospective chicken bird numbers. Nix refers to a figure of 0.01 SLDs per production place, whereas the ABC refers to 0.011 SLDs per bird place (and includes for catching and cleaning).
- a) Nix calculation - $330,000 \text{ bird places} \times 0.01 = 3,300 \text{ SLDs (divided by 275)} = 12 \text{ FTE}$
- b) ABC calculation - $330,000 \text{ bird places} \times 0.011 = 3,630 \text{ SLDs (divided by 275)} = 13.2 \text{ FTE}$
- 4.5 The above calculations show a full-time equivalent labour requirement of up to 13.2 FTEs for the proposed chicken rearing business which also accounts for depopulation and cleaning of buildings.

- 4.6 Regardless of the difference between planned labour and standard data requirements, it is clear that this is a sizeable poultry enterprise and the need relates to more than a full time worker.

5.0 BUILDINGS AND FIXED EQUIPMENT

- 5.1 The approved poultry farm will provide purpose built broiler accommodation for 330,000 bird places based on 6 buildings and associated infrastructure. These buildings are designed and built to Best Available Technique and specifically for the rearing of poultry.
- 5.2 Modern broiler poultry buildings are highly specialised agricultural structures designed to provide a carefully controlled internal environment that optimises bird welfare, health and productivity. Constructed using insulated steel portal-frame systems, the buildings incorporate automated feeding and drinking lines, computer-controlled ventilation, heating and cooling systems, environmental monitoring equipment and integrated biosecurity measures. Their design enables the maintenance of precise temperature, humidity and air quality conditions throughout the production cycle, ensuring compliance with current animal welfare standards and environmental permitting requirements.

6.0 DWELLINGS

- 6.1 There are 2 dwellings occupied by family members, both of which are located at Northorpe on the main holding. This is more than 3 miles from the poultry site. There is no dwelling at or near the new poultry unit for the tenant to occupy with a resident manager/key worker.

7.0 REASON FOR THE APPLICATION

- 7.1 Permission is sought for the siting of an agricultural worker's dwelling to accommodate the tenant's farm manager and enable them to undertake their key functional roles, whilst being available at short notice, in case of emergencies. Given the nature and extent of the activities, such a full-time and all-year-round role cannot be provided from off the site.

- 7.2 The essential (functional) need for the dwelling is established in the following chapter. Whilst in many instances, a temporary dwelling is sought for new enterprises, given the overall investment in this unit (estimated to be more than £5.4m) and the fact that the site will be fully stocked once the buildings are ready for occupation, a permanent dwelling tied to the poultry unit is considered acceptable.

8.0 FUNCTIONAL NEED

8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 A functional test is needed to understand what it is about the running of the business that requires someone to be present most of the time. This need must relate to the business based on the stocking and cropping requirements and not the personal needs of those running the business. The need must also relate to a full time worker. This functional need was accepted by the LPA in the previous application.
- 8.1.2 I consider that, given the nature and scale of the activity, there is a genuine need for farm manager accommodation on the site to enable them to be available at short notice at all times rather than living in a nearby centre or village. Supported by an accompanying letter from the poultry vet, it will become clear that it is not possible for the rural enterprise to run effectively without having the key worker living on site.
- 8.1.3 The functional need in this case is based on the day-to-day management and welfare requirements of the birds. Failure to provide the necessary supervision and prompt attendance to emergencies could result in significant bird loss and financial harm to the business. This need is unlike any other farm livestock where the risk of bird loss is high and can happen so quickly. With approximately 55,000 birds in each building, the risks and cost to the business are high.



8.2 Legal Requirements

- 8.2.1 Functional need, i.e. what is it that makes it essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise for one or more workers to be readily available at most times, is typically determined by the nature and scale of the operation concerned and where a suitably qualified and experienced worker is needed to be on hand day and night in case birds (as in this case) require essential care at short notice.
- 8.2.2 Functional need is based on animal welfare, although consideration should also be given to site security and business efficiency. Without well cared for animals and a secure site against theft, damage etc., the proper functioning of the business is significantly affected. Typically the need arises outside of normal working hours where the immediate attention is necessary and the key staff are not available.
- 8.2.3 Responsibility for the welfare of the birds is firmly on the 'keeper', i.e. 'the person responsible for or in charge of animals whether on a permanent or temporary basis.' It is an offence under the Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1968 to cause unnecessary pain or unnecessary distress to any livestock. All farmed animals must be managed in accordance with the Codes of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock, and in this case the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Meat Chickens and Meat Breeding Chickens dated 25th January 2024.
- 8.2.4 The aim of the current Welfare Codes is to encourage all those who care for animals to follow the highest standards of husbandry. Without good stockmanship, day or night, animal welfare can never be properly protected.
- 8.2.5 The Code is considered within a framework that was developed by the Farm Animal Welfare Council and known as 'The Five Freedoms' which are:
1. Freedom from thirst and hunger – by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour;
 2. Freedom from discomfort – by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting place;



3. Freedom from pain, injury or disease – by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment;
4. Freedom to express normal behaviour – by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animals' own kind;
5. Freedom from fear and distress – by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

8.2.6 The stock-keeper has the most significant influence on the welfare of animal; they should be knowledgeable and competent in a wide range of animal health and welfare skills, including handling, preventing and treating lameness, preventing and treating internal and external parasites, giving medicines by injection, providing appropriate care to sick and injured animals and management of animals to minimise aggression.

8.2.7 Badly managed and unhealthy birds will not thrive, and it is essential that the stock-keeper should watch for signs of distress, disease or aggression towards a bird by others in the group. To do this, it is important that stock-keepers have enough time to inspect the stock, check equipment and take action to deal with any problem.

8.2.8 As with all livestock holdings, in addition to complying with the Welfare Codes, there are other instances when emergencies can occur which demand an immediate response, and so all stock-keepers should be aware of the importance of regular inspections and be familiar with the normal behaviour patterns.

8.3 Poultry (Broilers)

8.3.1 As all the birds are reared within closed houses, they are solely reliant on the farm staff to regulate the environmental conditions to ensure their welfare. The chicks will come to site as day olds and reared on for 39 days. These are small, frail birds that are vulnerable to changes in regime.



- 8.3.2 The main concern with welfare is to ensure adequate water, feed, ventilation and temperature control in the houses. The feed and water controls are less time sensitive and a delay of 15 – 30 minutes in rectifying a fault will not cause the birds serious welfare issues. However, the control of temperature by ventilation systems is much more time dependent.
- 8.3.3 Temperature will be controlled within the buildings during the growing cycle by heating and ventilation systems; a pre-warmed temperature of 32°C on day 1 of the flock cycle and reducing to 18°C over the crop's cycle. At each stage of a bird's development there will be a certain thermal comfort zone. Within this broader zone there will be a temperature range of 1-2°C in which a bird makes best use of feed energy for growth.
- 8.3.4 When the ambient outside temperature is over 25°C, there is constant need to ensure adequate ventilation to cool the birds and when the temperature exceeds 30°C, the problem becomes acute. The most common time of day for a problem is late in the afternoon / early evening after a warm day when there is little air movement and the humidity is relatively high.
- 8.3.5 The birds find it difficult to reduce their body temperature and rely on environmental control systems to remove heat and CO₂ from the building. In the event of a fan /computer failure, the temperature in the house will rise rapidly and CO₂ levels will become dangerously high for both the birds and farm workers within 30 minutes. It is not uncommon for birds to start to die from heat stress and asphyxiation within 30 minutes of such a failure.
- 8.3.6 It is therefore essential that at all times there is a member of staff trained and available to respond rapidly to such a problem. Remote alarm systems (linked to mobile phones) can work and will be used here to monitor levels of feed, water, temperature and ventilation, however, human intervention is still required to rectify the problem. The tenant will not lease as site without on-site accommodation. For a unit of this size, they would normally be seeking two dwellings.



- 8.3.7 It has been suggested in the past that a time delay of 15 minutes is acceptable for travel to the to deal with emergencies. Experienced poultry vets argue that this assumes that the alarm is recognised or received immediately when there is a problem and that the competent person is able to immediately rectify the fault on arrival without any time to investigate. The supporting vet letter goes beyond that stating that failure to attend to any such emergency within 5 minutes will result in significant losses in animals, which in turn could have significant welfare and financial implications for the poultry unit manager and to the farm. This opinion will be based on real time experiences.
- 8.3.8 The rise in temperature is so rapid that any time delay will increase the chances of bird mortality increasing. Backup power supply is installed on all poultry farms to react in times of power failure. Management is required to check these systems on a regular basis. It is however not uncommon for backup generators to fail at the very time they are needed and immediate attention by trained staff is required to prevent a disaster.
- 8.3.9 As temperature rises, the birds, which cannot sweat, attempt to reduce their body temperature by hyperventilating and become recumbent. Oxygen levels are depleted and the ambient temperature at floor level will rise towards the bird's body temperature and reach 40°C. At this temperature, the bird in effect 'cooks', and if 'lucky' dies of heart failure due to asphyxiation. The process of death from overheating is very unpleasant and has to be avoided at all costs.
- 8.3.10 As outlined, ventilation also acts as the primary control of fresh air and ammonia levels within a poultry house. Without sufficient ventilation, CO₂ levels from bird respiration may exceed safe levels. Likewise, adequate ventilation reduces humidity, keeps litter dry and in turn prevents ammonia build up before it can occur. If ammonia levels do rise then increased ventilation can help reduce these.

- 8.3.11 Failures in ventilation equipment are one of the biggest threats to bird welfare on an intensive poultry unit. It is only with frequent stock inspection that problems can be avoided.
- 8.3.12 The frequent checking of the physical condition of stock not only meets best welfare practices but also helps to ensure optimum bird performance. Comb and wattle colour, muscle tone and level of activity can all be indicators of bird health. A move away from normal in anyone of these areas could indicate disease, overfeeding/underfeeding and incorrect ventilation/temperature. Without appropriate remedial action all these factors can impact on bird welfare.
- 8.3.13 In summary:
- Bird welfare – the birds require 7 day a week care, 24 hours a day.
 - Young chicks will be particularly vulnerable to illness, environmental conditions and require regular checking throughout each 24 hour period.
 - Regular inspections are made as early as 6.30am and as late as 10.00pm by trained personnel.
 - System alarms direct to phones can alert staff however human intervention is needed to reset temperature, watering and feeding systems.
 - A swift response and rectification of an emergency is needed to avoid potential bird loss, within 5 minutes in some instances according to poultry vet experts.
 - Panic due to a fright can lead to bird smothering and potentially significant bird loss (20%+).
 - CCTV can be helpful in monitoring birds however to be truly effective the observer must be close to the buildings for the system to work and be of benefit.

8.4 Biosecurity

- 8.4.1 As a result of bird flu etc. biosecurity has become ever more important on farms. Biosecurity means reducing the risk of disease occurring or spreading to other animals. Good biosecurity can be achieved through:
- good management/husbandry;
 - good hygiene;
 - reducing stress on the herd;
 - effective disease control systems such as vaccination and worming programmes.

- 8.4.2 Biosecurity results in farm units being more secure from the introduction of new infectious diseases and the spread of any diseases on the unit itself being kept to a minimum. It is especially important on a poultry unit. All movements on and off the farm have to be accurately recorded and it is important that disinfectant and disease control procedures are carefully observed.
- 8.4.3 Detection and attendance to emergencies, for example, building fires, livestock escapes and injuries in order to save life and minimise animal distress are equally important and can happen at any time of the day and night.
- 8.4.4 Whilst considered a secondary matter, it is also important that the overall security of the business and premises are maintained so that if intruders are on the site, their presence is detected and appropriate action taken. Thefts and break-ins cost the agricultural industry around £45m per annum according to the NFU. In this instance there is a risk of equipment and/or stock being stolen from the site if the site is not occupied.

9.0 VIABLE BUSINESS

- 9.1 Whilst this is a new site, the tenant, in operating over 250 farms, is well aware of the profitability of running a modern broiler unit and therefore viability of this site. In addition to a copy of the FBT, a projected margin for the site could be made available to the LPA, confidentially.
- 9.2 Whilst this is a new site, this is an established business with the tenant being the UK's largest poultry business producing with 7 million birds per week. They have processing sites, 8 feed mills, 6 hatcheries, 255 owned farms, over 50 rented farms and 200+ independent farmers as contract growers. This is a viable business.
- 9.3 Whilst historic policy has advised that normally a temporary dwelling on 3 year term is suitable to enable the new business to establish itself, in this case the wider business is very much established. Once the buildings are completed and first occupied, the site will be fully stocked. By the end of year 1, 7 crops of birds will have been reared and by year 3 a total of more than 22 crops. As a standalone unit, this will be profitable after 7 weeks of first occupation.

- 9.4 Given the established nature of the wider business, the investment cost and the viability, the direct application for a permanent dwelling is considered reasonable.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION

- 10.1 It is confirmed that there are no dwellings on the site, with all of other buildings elsewhere on the holding being unsuitable and unavailable.
- 10.2 A functional test is necessary and has been undertaken to establish whether it is essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise for one or more workers to be readily available at most times. To be readily available to meet the demands of the proposed poultry unit, the key worker needs to be accommodated on site. In assessing the functional demands of the business, it is essential for the key worker to be sited on the holding. This is essential for the proper functioning and viability of this food producing enterprise (a key point in the NPPF).
- 10.3 Policy for many years has been clear that isolated new houses in the countryside require special justification for planning permission to be granted, as referred to in the local Plan. One of the few special circumstances is to enable agricultural, forestry and certain other full-time rural workers to live at, or in the immediate vicinity of, their place of work. As in this case, due to the nature and demands of the work concerned, it is essential for the key worker to live at, or very close to, the site of their work.
- 10.4 The following are examples of recent planning applications and appeals where planning permission has been granted for a permanent dwelling associated with a new poultry enterprise. It is also relevant to add that there are few poultry units now owned and run by the tenant where on-site accommodation is not provided.

- Application number: 18/08/2021 143510 Particulars and location of development: Planning application for erection of poultry farm for chicken production, including 6no. poultry houses, 1no. agricultural workers dwelling and associated infrastructure. Johnnies Farm Land East of Plum Products Ltd The Cliff Ingham LN1 2YQ – West Lindsey
- Application number: 23/1477/FUL Proposal: Erection of an agricultural workers dwelling and garage in connection with approved poultry farm (21/1550/FUL). Leadenham Poultry Unit Sleaford Road, Leadenham, Lincolnshire LN5 0QY – North Kesteven
- Appeal Ref: APP/A3010/W/20/3251589 The development proposed is the erection of a Poultry Managers House (Agricultural Workers Dwelling. Farleys Farm, Ollerton Road, Tuxford NG22 0PG – Bassetlaw
- Appeal Ref: APP/U2750/W/23/3324770 Erection of an agricultural workers dwelling and garage. Killingbeck Farm, Red House Lane, Moor Monkton, York, YO26 8JF. North Yorkshire Council

10.5 A Rightmove search provides an indication of what accommodation is available for sale or rent at the time. With the emphasis on providing on-site accommodation to meet the identified essential need, such a search in this case to establish property in the area is somewhat irrelevant unless location adjacent to the site. There are no properties currently available for sale or rent within 0.25 km of the site.

**11. CONCLUSION**

- 11.1 It is clear and has been accepted previously that there is an essential functional need and that the evidence within this report highlights why that need is provided on site. This essential need is supported by the specialist poultry vet, the NFU and supported by recent planning and appeal decisions.
- 11.2 With on-site accommodation, the proper functioning and viability of the business will be severely affected. The impact would affect this site but also other ancillary businesses in the locality.
- 11.3 The tenant's wider business is well established and profitable. Part of the cost of production will be the site rent, the income of which will help support Wray Farms (landlord) as a local family farming business. The FBT relates to a 15 year term.
- 11.4 The proposal accords with the new NPPF and as a form of development acceptable outside settlements, it should be approved.



acorus planning & design

Addlepool Business Centre
Woodbury Road
Clyst St. George
Exeter
EX3 0NR

01392 873900
ask@acorus.co.uk
acorus.co.uk

DISCLAIMER

This report is for the sole use of the named client. While it may be shown to other professionals acting for them, the contents are not to be disclosed to, nor made use by, any third party without our express prior written consent. Without such consent we can accept no responsibility to any third party.



Acorus Rural Property Services Ltd (trading as Acorus)
Registered office: Agriculture House, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth CV8 2TZ
Registered in England No. 04514547

