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# Agricultural Dwelling Report

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Ings Lane, Kirkbymoorside, North Yorkshire

Moorside Alpacas, Ings Lane, Kirkbymoorside, North Yorkshire

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## 1. Background

- 1.1. Savills Food & Farming Department has been instructed by Mr and Mrs Richardson in connection with planning application 21/00301/PREAPP.
- 1.2. Planning consent is being sought to site a new agricultural workers dwelling on land at OS Field 0068, off Ings Lane, Kirkbymoorside, North Yorkshire.
- 1.3. This report sets out the business case for the need for an agricultural workers dwelling to support the agricultural enterprise at Ings Lane. This business case will be referenced against the criteria as detailed in the National Planning Policy Framework, the latest version of which is that of 20 July 2021. Which states at paragraph 80:

“Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless 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”
- 1.4. In the Ryedale Local Plan Strategy it is detailed at policy SP9 “The Land-Based and Rural Economy Ryedale’s land-based economy will be sustained and diversified with support for:

New buildings that are necessary to support land-based activity and a working countryside, including for farming, forestry and equine purposes”
- 1.5. As detailed in the letter from Ryedale District Council on 25 May 2021, although PPS7 has now been superseded, it provides an effective framework to test the functional and financial need for an agricultural workers dwelling, so this report will focus on those tests, which are:
  - i) there is a clearly established existing functional need (see paragraph 4 below);
  - ii) the need relates to a full-time worker, or one who is primarily employed in agriculture and does not relate to a part-time requirement;
  - iii) the unit and the agricultural activity concerned have been established for at least three years, have been profitable for at least one of them, are currently financially sound, and have a clear prospect of remaining so
  - iv) the functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned;
  - v) other planning requirements, e.g. in relation to access, or impact on the countryside are satisfied.

## 2. Current Farming Enterprise

- 2.1 Mr and Mrs Richardson farm a total of 22.25 acres, which has been done a part time basis, as both have continued to work on a full time basis until recently, since buying the land in 2004.
- 2.5 The total number of livestock farmed by the applicants currently is as detailed in the following table:

Livestock Farmed	
Livestock Type	Number
Alpacas- mature females	11
Alpacas- yearling females	3
Alpacas- born 2021	3
Alpacas – males (will go for breeding)	9
Llamas- mix of mature males and females	7
Sheep- Bluefaced Leicester tups (will go for breeding)	8
Sheep-Bluefaced Leicester breeding females	12
Sheep- Swaledales females	12
Poultry (hens and ducks)	15
Pedigree Shetland Mares	2

- 2.6 The applicants have cut back their work away from the holding, Mrs Richardson now works fulltime on the farming enterprise, after having worked as a bank branch manager for much of the time they have owned the land and Mr Richardson is due to cut down to 3 days a week of work away from the holding. This has given them the opportunity to increase their livestock enterprise, and by 2026 it is planned that there will be 35 breeding alpacas, and around 30 breeding sheep, with poultry numbers being maintained where they are.
- 2.7 The holding can support this number of alpacas and sheep as shown by the following calculation (industry standard stocking rates are not available for alpacas on a livestock unit basis, so the calculation works stock numbers out on a weight per hectare basis and then converts it to a Livestock Unit and a sheep equivalent).
- i) Up until this point a lot of surplus grass has been sold as hay, which will no longer be the case when animal numbers are increased:

- ii) The stocking rate of 0.3 livestock units per acre or just under 3 sheep per acre should comfortably be achieved on land in this location, given it is lowland grazing on a clay based soil.

## Stocking Rate- Ings Lane Land

	Kg per animal	Number of Animals	Kg of Animals
Alpaca- Mature Weight	75	35	2,625
Sheep- Mature Weight Leicesters	85	15	1,275
Sheep- Mature Weight Swaledales	65	15	975
		<b>Total</b>	<b>4,875</b>
<b>Acres of Land</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>Hectares of Land</b>	<b>8.90</b>
Kg of Livestock per Acre	222	Kg of Livestock per Hectare	548
Average Sheep Weight	75		75
<b>Sheep Equivalent per Acre</b>	<b>2.95</b>	<b>Sheep Equivalent per Hectare</b>	<b>7.30</b>
<b>Livestock Units per Acre (sheep at 0.1 LU)</b>	<b>0.30</b>	<b>Livestock Units per Acre (sheep at 0.1 LU)</b>	<b>0.73</b>

- 2.8 The applicants have sufficient equipment to manage the increased livestock numbers, as they already have two tractors suitable for grass and livestock work, and the full range of trailed equipment needed to manage an all grass holding. Mr and Mrs Richardson also have sufficient buildings to accommodate the concentrate feed and hay the animals need.
- 2.9 The focus of the business is producing pedigree livestock, with the Bluefaced Leicester sheep used to produce tups that are sold onto other farms for breeding. With the alpacas breeding males and females are sold to other keepers for breeding as well. The Swaledale sheep provide a means of checking how the Bluefaced Leicester sheep perform when crossed with a hill ewe, so that the sheep breeding programme can be continuously improved, (the majority of the applicants customers will use the Bluefaced Leicesters for crossing onto hill breeds).
- 2.10 The business invests in the quality of the breeding stock it owns, with one of the male alpacas purchased by a previous owner costing £20,000, the Richardsons paid less than this for the animal as he is now older, but the alpaca stock will still benefit from his genetics in their breeding. With more time now to dedicate to the marketing of the livestock, the alpacas when sold breeding animals should average £2,250 per head, with a range of £1,500 to £3,000 per animal for breeding animals and £700 for non-breeding males. The Bluefaced Leicester tups will average £550 per head, with a range of £300 to £800 each.

## 3. Establishing whether there is a functional need

### 3.1. “There is a clearly established existing functional need”

3.1.1. The Richardsons farming enterprise has been able to function without a dwelling, whilst the number of breeding animals have been built up, but numbers of livestock have now increased, especially the alpacas. The number of breeding animals has risen so in 2022 there will be 10 alpacas born and by 2025-2026 there will be 35 breeding alpacas and therefore 35 births.

3.1.2 There are well established agricultural industry standards for the amount of labour needed per breeding sheep, but they are not published for alpacas. Alpacas require greater overall care than sheep, due to them needing to be provided with hay or other fibrous feeds for a greater period of the year than is the case for sheep to ensure they have the correct digestive functioning. Alpacas also need supplementing with vitamin D when kept in the UK, as sunlight levels are less than in their native South American range.

3.1.3 Additionally when handling alpacas it is common practice for two people to be needed for many tasks, for example shearing, which adds to the overall labour requirement.

3.1.4 A new income stream that is being developed by Mr and Mrs Richardson is the provision of meeting and walking with alpacas as a leisure activity, which adds to the overall time spent working in the business. The table below details the labour the business needs now livestock numbers are being increased to meet the potential stocking capacity of the land.

<b>Ings Lane Labour Requirement</b>			
Assuming one labour unit is 1,850 hours per year			
<b>Livestock</b>	<b>Hours/ Head/ Year</b>	<b>Head</b>	<b>Total Hours</b>
Breeding Sheep*	8	30	240
Alpacas- direct work	32	35	1120
Time with alpaca experience customers, 10 hours per week			416
Time on Maintenance, Poultry and Shetland mares			520
	<b>TOTAL HOURS FOR FARM</b>		<b>2296</b>
	<b>NUMBER OF LABOUR UNITS NEEDED</b>		<b>1.24</b>
*Data is based on the ABC Book May 2021, but hours per increased to reflect that the sheep are pedigree			
For the alpacas the hours are calculated from the experience of the applicants and comments by other in the industry			

- 3.1.5 The functional need to have someone on hand at all times of day and night can only be met, by them being able to live in a dwelling for agricultural workers at the site. In 2011 the applicants increased livestock numbers to over 50 Bluefaced Leicester sheep and 48 alpacas, but as they were living off site, this proved to be unsustainable and numbers were reduced down again.
- 3.1.6 In order to be able to provide assistance to alpacas giving birth, as well as lambing sheep with the rise in livestock numbers, it is important that the worker lives within in sight and sound of the buildings where the breeding livestock are kept, so they can respond to their needs within minutes, if an animal health emergency occurs.
- 3.1.7 Alpacas can give birth on a year round basis, but it is not possible to synchronise births effectively, as compared to cattle and sheep they have a much greater range in their gestation periods, which can be from 48 to 53 weeks. Additionally after having a cria, when they are mated again, it can take a few weeks for the female to become pregnant again (alpacas are induced ovulators). A range of a month between the first and the last of a group of alpacas becoming pregnant again is not uncommon.
- 3.1.8 Therefore if two female alpacas started their first pregnancy on the same day, the point when their second cria is born could commonly be two months apart, and the day their second cria is born could be commonly 4 months apart. The breeding cycle is also disrupted during the shearing period each year, as in the weeks before shearing mating is avoided to avoid the risk of an embryo being lost.
- 3.1.9 It is not possible to predict by observing the animals when alpacas will give birth, compared to cattle, which for example “bag up” ahead of giving birth. In contrast, ahead of having a cria alpacas show very few changes in behaviour or udder size, this reinforces the need for the applicants to be on hand day and night now that alpaca numbers have increased. When alpacas give birth there can be a tendency for umbilical cords not snapping correctly, which can cause the loss of the cria, meaning they need additional monitoring compared to other livestock when giving birth.
- 3.1.10 During the lambing period the sheep will also need much greater out of hours care, the two different breeds kept by the applicants lamb at different times. Bluefaced Leicesters are typically bred to lamb in February so that the resulting tup lambs are as large as possible for the autumn sales. The Swaledales being a hill breed struggle to conceive that early in the season, and in order to replicate the lambing time of the customers for the Bluefaced Leicesters (which are typically hill sheep flocks lambing in April), Mr and Mrs Richardson also lamb their Swaledales then as well.
- 3.1.11 . In the weeks before and after lambing, sheep are particularly prone to metabolic diseases such as “twin lamb disease” , where the energy demands from the growing lambs before birth can mean the ewe does not have sufficient reserves to meet her and the lamb’s needs, in such circumstances the ewe needs very rapid treatment or she and lambs can be lost. Ewes with multiple lambs are particularly prone to twin lamb disease, as those carrying a higher number of lambs can often be subject to their stomachs being compressed by the growing lambs, which then suppresses their appetite and puts them in a negative energy position.

- 3.1.12 The Bluefaced Leicesters are a particularly fertile breed (which is why the tups of the breed are in demand for crossing with hardier but less fertile breeds, to improve the lambing percentage of the offspring). The Bluefaced Leicesters typically have at least two lambs, and three or four lambs is not uncommon. When a ewe has this many lambs, she needs much greater assistance during the lambing process than when compared with sheep that only have one lamb.
- 3.1.13 Dog attacks on livestock are an increasing issue for the agricultural sector, and having the applicants on hand at all times, not only acts as a deterrent but also ensures that if worrying of the sheep does occur they are available immediately to manage the animals welfare accordingly. Potential thefts of livestock is an increasing concern for sector as a whole, and particularly given the nature of the applicants business producing high value animals they are at more risk than others in the district. Having a dwelling on site will act as a significant deterrent to thieves.
- 3.1.14 A dwelling on site at Ings Lane would allow the business to function if a disease outbreak occurred in the livestock sector, such as foot and mouth, as when the outbreak occurred in 2001 movement of people connected to agriculture was limited at times, and there would a greater risk of disease being brought onto the farm during such a disease episode if Mr and Mrs Richardson were travelling to and from the land and buildings each way.

## **3.2. “The need relates to a full-time worker, or one who is primarily employed in agriculture and does not relate to a part-time requirement”**

- 3.2.1 As detailed at 3.1.4, the increased numbers of livestock mean that the requirement is for someone working on a full time basis, the applicants are now able to fulfil this, with reducing the work they do away from the farm significantly.



**3.3. “The unit and agricultural activity concerned has been established for at least three years, has been profitable for at least one of them and are currently financially sound and have a clear prospect of remaining so”**

3.3.1 Mr and Mrs Richardson started their livestock enterprise in 2004, so it has been established for considerably longer than the 3 year requirement. The business has not made a profit in the last three years, as it has been investing in greater livestock numbers and growing the business as a whole, including building a new shed. This is reflected in the closing stock values increasing over this time, which is shown in the financial statements provided by Hallgarth Accountants.

3.3.2 As the applicants are now in a position to concentrate on their farming enterprise they can dedicate more time to attending farming events and marketing the alpacas and Bluefaced Leicesters in particular. Animals with very similar genetics to the Richardsons, have achieved higher prices than the Richardson's have seen, but due to work commitments until this point, they have not been able to attend all the necessary shows and sales to maximise the value of each animal.

3.3.3 Margins will be further increased by people coming to lngs Lane to have alpaca experiences, such as feeding, grooming and walking with them. Typical charges for sort of activity are £25 per person, for a 90 minute period.

**3.4. “The functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned”**

3.4.1 As detailed at 3.1 in order to meet the functional need of the alpacas giving birth on a year round basis and the sheep lambing in two batches, the dwelling needs to be within sight and sound of the land and buildings.

3.4.2 There are no dwellings that are available to the applicants that are within sight and sound of the lngs Lane land, the closest houses along the road are in private ownership and not for sale. Any other houses in Kirkbymoorside would be too far away from the animals to meet the functional need.

**3.5 “Other planning requirements, e.g. in relation to access, or impact on the countryside are satisfied”**

3.5.1 This section is being addressed by Bell Snoxell Building Consultants in their report.

## 4. Conclusions

4.1 Due to the expansion of the livestock numbers farmed by Mr and Mrs Richardson there is now a functional need for them to have a dwelling on Ings Lane that is within sight and sound of the animals, so that they can give the required out of hours care to the animals on a year round basis. The enterprise has not been profitable in recent years due to investment in more stock, buildings and inputs to grow the business. Now the applicants have the ability to dedicate more time to market their stock, when combined with higher breeding animal numbers a positive margin will be created, as shown by the budget at Appendix 1 for the 2026 year (when livestock numbers will match the potential of the holding), and the summaries for the earlier years. This positive margin will be aided by the business also providing experiences with alpacas. Therefore, for the business to continue to grow, and move into its next phase a dwelling is now required.

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## Appendix 1

Ings Lane-	Budget 2026						
<u>Subsidies</u>						£	Total
<b>Basic Payment</b>							
	£/Ha	Ha	Gross				
Non-SDA	65.00	8.90	578.71			£ 579	
<b>Other Income</b>							
	Number per Year	£/ Person					
Alpaca Experiences	100	28				2800	
<b>SHEEP GROSS MARGIN: Swaledales Bred to Bluefaced Leicester's</b>							
<b>Sheep Sales- Lambs</b>							
Ewes Numbers	Lambing %	Total Lambs sold	5% mortality			Total	
15	190	27					
	Ewe Lambs Sold Breeding		£/ Head				
	14		120			1,625	
	Wether Lambs Sold Store		£/ head				
	14		70			948	
<b>Cull Sheep</b>							
Ewes Numbers	10% mortality						
15	% Culled	Culls Sold (10% mort)	Kg Liveweight	£/Kg			
	20	3	55	0.8		119	
	Ewes Numbers	Wool £/Head	£/hd	44			
<b>Wool</b>	15	0.3					5
						<b>SHEEP INCOME</b>	<b>2,695</b>
<b>VARIABLE COSTS</b>							
Replacements	Ewes	Replacement %	Replacements	£/ head	£		
Ewes	15	30	5	70		315	
Rams	0.3	25	0	500		38	
Feed Costs	No.	kg/ head	Tonnes	£/ Tonne			
Ewes Conc.	15	25	0	255		96	
Lamb Conc.	27	5	0.1	255		35	
Vet & Med	No	£/ Head					
Ewes	15	6				90	
Lambs	27	2				54	
Ewe Lamb - Shearling Costs	5	12				54	
Sundries	27	12				325	
						<b>SHEEP VARIABLES COSTS</b>	<b>1,006</b>
						<b>Swaledale Gross Margin</b>	<b>1,690</b>

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Ings Lane-	Budget 2026	Continued				
<b>SHEEP GROSS MARGIN: Bluefaced Leicester's Bred Pure</b>						
<b>Sheep Sales- Lambs</b>						
Ewes Numbers	Lambing %	Total Lambs sold	5% mortality		Total	
15	220	31				
	Ewe Lambs Sold Breeding		£/ Head			
	11		180		2,012	
	Wether Lambs Sold as Tups		£/ head			
	16		550		8,621	
<b>Cull Sheep</b>						
Ewes Numbers	10% mortality	Culls Sold (10% mort)	Kg Liveweight	£/Kg		
15	20	3	90	1	243	
	Ewes Numbers	Wool £/Head				
	15	1			15	
					<b>SHEEP INCOME</b>	<b>10,891</b>
<b>VARIABLE COSTS</b>						
Replacements	Ewes	Replacement %	Replacements	£/ head	£	
Ewes*	15	30	5	0	0	
Rams	0.3	25	0	1000	75	
*Female replacements own bred						
Feed Costs	No.	kg/ head	Tonnes	£/ Tonne		
Ewes Conc.	15	25	0	255	96	
Lamb Conc.	31	5	0.2	255	40	
Vet & Med	No	£/ Head				
Ewes	15	6			90	
Lambs	31	2			63	
Ewe Lamb - Shearling Costs	5	12			54	
Sundries	31	12			376	
					<b>SHEEP VARIABLES COSTS</b>	<b>793</b>
					<b>Bluefaced Leicester Gross Margin</b>	<b>10,097</b>
<b>ALPACA GROSS MARGIN</b>						
<b>Alpaca Sales- Yearlings</b>						
Breeding Numbers	Cria % Reared	Total Yearlings sold	5% mortality		Total	
35	100	33				
	Females Sold Breeding		£/ Head			
	6		1500		9,188	
	Males Sold Breeding		£/ head			
	2		3000		4,988	
	Males Sold- Nonbreeding		£/ head			
	15		700		10,474	
	Breeding Numbers	Wool £/Kg	Kg/ Head			
	35	6	4		840	
					<b>ALPACA INCOME</b>	<b>25,489</b>
<b>VARIABLE COSTS</b>						
Replacements	Number	Replacement %	Replacements	£/ head	£	
Females	35	30	11	0	0	
Males	3	15	0	10000	4,500	
*Female replacements own bred						
Feed Costs	No.	kg/ head	Tonnes	£/ Tonne		
Females	35	50	2	300	525	
Males	3	50	0.2	300	45	
Vet & Med	No	£/ Head				
Ewes	35	30			1,050	
Lambs	3	30			90	
					<b>ALPACA VARIABLES COSTS</b>	<b>6,210</b>
					<b>Alpaca Gross Margin</b>	<b>19,279</b>

Ings Lane-	Budget 2026	Continued				
<b>GROSS MARGIN SUMMARY</b>						
Swaledale Gross Margin			£	1,689.73		
Bluefaced Leicester Gross Margin			£	10,097.25		
Alpaca			£	19,278.75		
Subsidy			£	578.71		
Other Income			£	2,800.00		
Forage	Fertiliser, Sprays & Hay Production		£	2,200.00	£100 per acre (£250/ha)	
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>£</b>	<b>36,644.45</b>		
<b>FIXED COSTS</b>						
				Ha	Sub Total	Total
Paid labour				8.90	£ -	
Machinery Depreciation				8.90	£ 4,000	
Machinery Running Costs				8.90	£ 3,100	
Building Maintenance & Insurance				8.90	£ 4,000	
Interest & Banking				8.90	£ 1,100	
Water & Electricity				8.90	£ 650	
Prof Fees & Misc				8.90	£ 3,100	
					<b>TOTAL FIXED COSTS</b>	<b>£ 15,950</b>
					<b>NET MARGIN</b>	<b>£ 20,694</b>

## Summary of Forecast Financial Returns

Budget Year	2023	2024	2025	2026
Breeding Females Swaledales- Number	13	13	15	15
Breeding Females Leicesters- Number	13	13	15	15
Breeding Females Alpacas- Number	18	22	30	35
Alpaca Experience Income	£1,625	£1,625	£2,380	£2,800
Basic Payment	£1,335	£1,068	£846	£579
Sheep Gross Margin- Swaledales	£1,464	£1,464	£1,690	£1,690
Sheep Gross Margin- Blue Faced Leicesters	£8,751	£8,751	£10,097	£10,097
Alpaca Breeding & Wool Gross Margin	£7,664	£10,397	£15,863	£19,279
Hay Production	£2,200	£2,200	£2,200	£2,200
<b>Gross Income</b>	<b>£23,039</b>	<b>£25,505</b>	<b>£33,075</b>	<b>£36,644</b>
Fixed Costs	£15,600	£15,700	£15,800	£15,950
<b>Net Margin</b>	<b>£7,439</b>	<b>£9,805</b>	<b>£17,275</b>	<b>£20,694</b>