Oak Court Farm

Rural Enterprise Dwelling Appraisal

Oak Court Farm, (adjacent to Vron Farm), Llewelyn Road, Vron, Tanyfron, Wrexham LL11 5TW

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this Rural Enterprise Dwelling Appraisal is to assess the need for a rural enterprise worker's dwelling at Oak Court Farm, Tanyfron, Wrexham, in accordance with the requirements of Technical Advice Note 6 (TAN 6): *Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities.*

The appraisal has been prepared in support of a planning application for the siting of a temporary rural enterprise worker's dwelling in the form of a static caravan.

Oak Court Farm comprises an agricultural holding of approximately 13.48 acres operated by Oak Court Enterprises Ltd. The enterprise incorporates horticulture, livestock and poultry management, together with associated land-based, environmental stewardship, and land management activities.

This appraisal addresses the key tests set out in TAN 6, namely:

- the functional test;
- the time / labour test;
- the financial test; and
- the other dwellings test.

The appraisal draws upon operational records, labour monitoring data, business planning information, and other site-specific evidence in order to assess the requirements of the enterprise and the need for an on-site worker against the TAN 6 tests.

2. Functional Test

2.1 Policy Test

TAN 6 requires the functional test to establish whether it is essential, for the proper functioning of the rural enterprise, for one or more workers to be readily available at most times, at or close to the holding. The test relates particularly to unexpected situations arising outside normal working hours, where immediate attention is required, rather than personal preference or convenience. The Welsh Government Practice Guide[1] recognises that functional need may arise through the management of risks inherent within the enterprise. This may include risks relating to livestock welfare and containment, crop or product quality, health and safety, weather-related infrastructure failure requiring immediate physical intervention, and the economic well-being of the enterprise.

This section therefore considers whether the management requirements of Oak Court Farm create a need for an on-site worker to be readily available at most times, and whether that need could reasonably be addressed through alternative arrangements.

[1] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan6-sustainable-rural-communities.pdf

2.2 Nature of the Functional Need at Oak Court Farm

Oak Court Farm is a small, low-impact agricultural holding incorporating horticulture, livestock and poultry management, and associated land management activities. The holding is exposed to severe and changeable weather conditions and currently relies upon lightweight, temporary, and semi-temporary infrastructure while the enterprise continues to develop.

The functional need arises principally from the interaction between:

- livestock welfare and containment;
- weather-driven risks to shelters, fencing and temporary infrastructure;
- crop and horticultural management requirements;
- off-grid water, power, refrigeration, and operational systems;
- the absence of any reliable remote means of detecting and resolving urgent incidents; and
- the need for immediate physical intervention when failures occur.

These risks cannot adequately be managed through routine attendance alone, because they may arise unpredictably, outside normal working hours, and require immediate physical intervention. The functional need therefore arises from the operational character of the enterprise and the requirement for timely detection and response to events which cannot reliably be managed through off-site arrangements.

2.3 Primary Functional Need: Livestock Welfare and Containment

The holding currently includes sheep managed within fenced grazing areas and poultry requiring secure housing, daily opening and closing procedures, predator protection, egg collection, and ongoing welfare oversight. Even at the present scale, the enterprise carries an ongoing duty to ensure livestock welfare and containment.

The key functional risks are not limited to routine husbandry. They include unexpected events such as:

- fencing failure;
- entanglement or injury;
- storm-related shelter failure;
- loss of containment;
- predator risk to poultry; and
- exposure to adverse weather conditions.

Such events may arise unexpectedly, including outside normal working hours, and may require immediate physical intervention. They cannot be resolved remotely and cannot safely be left until the next routine visit.

A key example occurred on 9 December 2025 at approximately 7.30pm in darkness during ‘Storm Bram’ which created severe storm conditions. The sheep shelter was lifted by gusting

winds, turned onto its side, and landed across the electric fence, pinning it to the ground while the fence remained live.

This created several immediate risks:

- the fence was compromised while still live;
- livestock containment was compromised;
- the displaced shelter presented a physical hazard until secured;
- the sheep were left without effective shelter during an ongoing severe storm;
- the condition of the animals could not be fully assessed due to darkness and weather conditions.

Immediate on-site intervention was required to disconnect and make safe the affected fence; recover and right the shelter, and secure it against further movement; and check the sheep for injury or distress.

The incident was identified only because the applicants were present on site. Had the holding been managed from off-site accommodation, there would have been no reliable means of knowing that the incident had occurred, and therefore no trigger for attendance or response. The absence of injury reflects prompt intervention and does not indicate an absence of risk.

This is central to the functional need identified at Oak Court Farm: the issue is not merely one of response time, but of detection itself. In the absence of on-site presence, both detection and intervention would have been delayed or entirely absent, leaving livestock exposed to unmanaged welfare and containment risks.

While this incident provides a particularly clear example of the functional need identified at Oak Court Farm, it forms part of a broader pattern of recorded reactive interventions associated with livestock welfare, infrastructure failure, and severe weather conditions on the holding.

2.4 Ongoing Availability During Severe Weather

The 9 December 2025 incident was not a single momentary event. Severe weather conditions continued after the initial intervention, meaning that further movement of the shelter, repeated fencing damage, or additional livestock risk could have arisen without warning.

The incident therefore demonstrates not only the need for immediate intervention (including outside normal working hours), but also the need for continued on-site availability during unstable conditions. Off-site residence would not provide the same capacity for ongoing monitoring and rapid repeat responses during such events.

This incident is not relied upon as an isolated anecdote. It is representative of a broader pattern of environmentally driven operational risks experienced on the holding. During periods of severe weather, the holding has experienced repeated wind-related

infrastructure failures and urgent interventions affecting livestock shelters, temporary structures, fencing, power generation equipment, and other operational infrastructure.

Also, in the previous season, on 15 September 2025, it took all three people on-site, together with assistance from a neighbour, to safely bring down the wind turbine, which was at risk of structural failure during severe wind conditions.

These incidents demonstrate that environmentally driven operational risks are not exceptional or isolated issues, but recurring conditions affecting the holding across changing seasonal and weather patterns.

The significance of these events lies not simply in the loss or damage to infrastructure itself, but in what these failures demonstrate: sudden, unpredictable, weather-related incidents can create immediate safety, livestock welfare, containment, and operational risks requiring physical intervention. Examples of recorded reactive interventions and operational monitoring activity associated with severe weather conditions are included within Annex X.

2.5 Why Routine Visits Would Not Meet the Need

Routine visits would not provide an adequate means of meeting the functional need. The most serious risks arise unpredictably, often in adverse conditions and outside normal working hours.

A routine visit system would fail because:

- incidents may occur between visits;
- there may be no reliable external indication that a problem has arisen;
- livestock may remain exposed to risk until the next visit;
- physical intervention may be required immediately; and
- adverse weather may cause conditions to deteriorate rapidly.

In the 9 December incident, the core issue was not simply that response time would have been delayed. The incident would not have been detected at all unless someone was present on site.

Accordingly, the identified functional need cannot adequately be met through a system of routine attendance from off-site accommodation.

2.6 Why Remote Monitoring Would Not Meet the Functional Need

Remote monitoring would not remove the functional need for immediate physical intervention. Cameras or sensors may, in some circumstances, assist with observation. However, they cannot make a live electric fence safe, recover a displaced shelter, secure livestock infrastructure, or physically assess animals for injury or distress. Nor can they guarantee reliable detection during darkness, severe weather conditions, or where an incident occurs outside a monitored field of view.

Reliance on neighbours or third parties would be inappropriate and unreliable in relation to time-critical livestock welfare and containment risks. Living elsewhere nearby would not resolve the core issue. In many urgent incidents, the applicants would not know that a problem had arisen. Even where an issue was detected remotely, the delay associated with travelling to the holding would leave livestock and infrastructure exposed to continuing unmanaged risk prior to intervention.

The functional need at Oak Court Farm is therefore not simply a need for awareness. It is a need for immediate physical presence together with the ability to intervene directly.

2.7 Why Improved Infrastructure Would Not Remove the Functional Need

The applicants continue to improve and secure temporary infrastructure as part of the ongoing management of the holding. However, improved anchoring, shelter design, and wind mitigation measures can reduce risk but cannot eliminate it.

The recorded operational evidence demonstrates that environmentally driven failures and reactive incidents may still occur despite mitigation measures and infrastructure improvements and may still require immediate response. The functional need therefore relates to residual risk within the operation of the enterprise: the need for a worker to be available when mitigation measures prove insufficient or when unexpected failures occur.

2.8 Conclusion on Functional Test

The functional need at Oak Court Farm arises from the need to manage unpredictable risks relating to livestock welfare, containment, safety, and the proper functioning of the enterprise, including circumstances requiring time-critical intervention.

The evidence demonstrates that:

- incidents may arise outside normal working hours;
- incidents may require immediate physical intervention;
- detection may depend upon on-site presence;
- remote monitoring would not provide the ability to intervene physically; and
- routine visits or off-site residence would not provide an adequate alternative.

Accordingly, the applicants consider that on-site accommodation is essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise such that one or more workers are required to be readily available at most times at, or in close proximity to, the site of need.

3. Time / Labour Test

3.1 Policy Test

The time (or labour) test requires consideration of whether the rural enterprise generates a level of labour demand sufficient to justify at least one full-time worker.

In accordance with TAN 6, this involves assessing the total labour requirement of the enterprise, taking account of both routine and non-routine tasks. The assessment must also consider whether the scale and nature of activity support a sustained need for at least one full-time worker.

3.2 Approach to Labour Assessment

The labour requirement at Oak Court Farm has been assessed using contemporaneous records of daily activities undertaken on the holding, maintained through a live-logging system and subsequently analysed within a structured labour monitoring framework.

These records capture:

- the nature of tasks undertaken;
- the time spent on each activity; and
- the distribution and timing of work across the day.

Summaries of recorded labour activity and operational monitoring data are provided at Annex X.

Recorded activities include livestock management, horticulture, infrastructure maintenance, environmental management, operational monitoring, and reactive interventions associated with the functioning of the holding.

For the purposes of this assessment, only labour directly attributable to the rural enterprise has been included within the figures relied upon for the Time / Labour Test. Activities relating to external consultancy work, domestic tasks, and other non-enterprise activities are categorised separately within the operational records and are not relied upon in demonstrating the labour requirement generated by the enterprise.

3.3 Nature of Labour Requirement

The recorded data demonstrate that labour requirements arise from a combination of:

- routine daily tasks (e.g. livestock and poultry checks, feeding, egg collection, crop care, watering, and monitoring);
- periodic and seasonal tasks (e.g. planting, infrastructure setup, and maintenance); and
- reactive and time-critical interventions arising from weather conditions, infrastructure issues, welfare concerns, and other operational incidents.

The inclusion of reactive tasks is particularly significant because such activities contribute not only to the total labour requirement of the enterprise, but also to the distribution and unpredictability of labour demand across the day, as identified in the Functional Test above.

3.4 Recorded Labour Input

Analysis of recorded labour data demonstrates that the enterprise requires a sustained and substantial level of labour input.

Even at its current stage, the holding routinely generates a combined labour requirement in excess of a standard full-time working day.

When assessed on a weekly basis, the recorded labour requirement generated by the enterprise is sufficient to equate to more than two full-time roles overall, including in excess of one full-time equivalent agricultural role.

This reflects the operational reality of the enterprise, in which multiple Directors of the company contribute directly to the management and functioning of the holding on a sustained basis. The recorded labour input is therefore not indicative of occasional assistance or exceptional circumstances, but of the routine operational demands generated by the enterprise itself.

3.5 Distribution of Labour Across the Day

The recorded data further demonstrate that labour is distributed across the day, rather than being confined to fixed working hours.

Working patterns are influenced by seasonal and weather conditions, which affect both the timing and nature of operational tasks. Certain routine husbandry activities are necessarily tied to environmental conditions and natural daily cycles, meaning that task timing cannot always be confined to conventional working hours.

Unlike a conventional employment pattern based upon fixed weekday working hours, the operational requirements of the holding arise throughout the week and across the year. Livestock welfare, poultry management, crop husbandry, infrastructure monitoring, and environmental stewardship activities are not confined to a five-day working week and require ongoing attention through the year, including weekends, public holidays, and periods of adverse weather.

In practice, this results in operational activity extending from early morning through to late evening during significant parts of the year. For example, periods of extreme heat may require physically demanding work to be deferred during the middle of the day, while simultaneously increasing the need for livestock welfare monitoring, including the management of shade and water availability. Similarly, routine livestock management tasks require both early morning and later evening attendance during periods of extended daylight hours.

Poultry management provides a clear example of this pattern, requiring morning opening procedures, evening securing of housing, welfare checks, feeding, watering, and egg collection at times which are influenced by seasonal daylight conditions and animal welfare considerations.

Such conditions do not reduce labour demand, but instead alter its distribution and may increase the need for timely intervention.

Activities take place:

- in the early morning (e.g. livestock and poultry checks, opening poultry housing, feeding and watering);
- throughout the daytime (e.g. horticulture, infrastructure work, maintenance and stewardship activities); and
- during evening periods, including securing poultry housing, livestock welfare checks, operational monitoring and reactive intervention activities where required.

This pattern reflects the operational reality of the holding and supports the identified need for one or more workers to be readily available at most times, as identified in the Functional Test.

3.6 Conclusion on Time / Labour Test

The evidence demonstrates that the rural enterprise at Oak Court Farm generates a sustained labour requirement equivalent to more than two full-time roles overall, including in excess of one full-time equivalent role directly attributable to agricultural activity.

This labour requirement arises from a combination of routine, seasonal, reactive, and out-of-hours operational tasks, and is distributed across the day in a manner consistent with the environmental and operational needs of the holding.

Accordingly, the applicants consider that the enterprise satisfies the Time / Labour Test set out in TAN 6.

4. Financial Test

4.1 Policy Test

The financial test requires consideration of whether the rural enterprise is financially sustainable and capable of supporting the proposed dwelling.

For new or developing enterprises, TAN 6 recognises that full financial performance may not yet be demonstrable at the outset. In such cases, a temporary dwelling may be appropriate to allow the enterprise to develop and demonstrate its sustainability over time.

4.2 Stage of Enterprise Development

Oak Court Farm is a developing rural enterprise currently in its establishment phase.

At this stage, activity has focused on:

- setting up infrastructure;
- establishing cropping systems;
- initiating and expanding livestock and poultry management; and
- developing operational systems and productive capacity across the holding.

While the enterprise has not yet generated significant income from the sale of produce, this reflects the early stage of development rather than an absence of underlying viability. Further detail regarding the structure of the enterprise, its phased operational development, and projected financial performance is provided with the Business Plan (Annex VIII).

As with many developing rural enterprises, the operational progression of Oak Court Farm has not followed a perfectly linear trajectory. Enterprise establishment has been materially influenced by severe weather events, infrastructure vulnerability during the early off-grid phase, capital constraints associated with staged self-funded deployment, and the need for temporary off-farm income support during the establishment period.

These factors have affected the timing of projected expansion and income generation when compared with the earliest business plan forecasts. However, the enterprise has continued to develop operationally throughout this period, including through infrastructure deployment, livestock management, horticultural establishment, environmental management and the generation of substantial recorded labour input across the holding.

The applicants therefore consider that the current operational evidence provides a more accurate and reliable indicator of enterprise progression and viability than reliance on early-stage projected timelines alone.

In addition, a significant proportion of early-stage activity has been directed towards site-specific assessment and establishment work. This has included evaluating the performance of different areas of the holding for crop production, testing alternative cultivation methods (including in-ground and raised systems), monitoring the effects of weather conditions across the site, and developing appropriate site-specific management approaches.

This process has required observation and intervention across multiple seasons and forms an essential part of establishing a viable and sustainable agricultural enterprise. It also includes the construction of longer-term productive systems, such as hügelkultur beds, which involve substantial initial labour input but provide long-term productive capacity with reduced ongoing input requirements.

4.3 Evidence of Active Enterprise

The enterprise is demonstrably active and operational.

Evidence includes:

- ongoing horticultural, livestock, poultry, and land management activity across the holding;
- recorded labour input demonstrating sustained operational demand;
- continued investment of time and resources into infrastructure, environmental management, productive capacity, and operational resilience; and
- formal business registration, food business registration, and operational governance structure.

The enterprise also incorporates environmental stewardship and biodiversity management as integrated components of the overall operational approach to the holding.

This distinguishes the enterprise from speculative or undeveloped proposals.

Examples of this integrated operational approach, described further within the GIBS and ESS, include hedgerow planting, biodiversity-supporting habitat measures, ecological monitoring activities, and productive land management activities undertaken across the holding. These measures form part of the applicants' operational and land management approach across the holding.

4.4 Income Potential and Development Trajectory

The enterprise has a clear and realistic pathway to income generation, including:

- horticultural production;
- livestock production; and
- associated food-production and processing activities.

These activities are at varying stages of operational development and are expected to contribute progressively towards the financial sustainability of the enterprise over time.

As with many developing rural enterprises, progression has not followed a perfectly linear trajectory. Severe weather events, infrastructure vulnerability during the early off-grid phase, capital constraints associated with staged self-funded deployment, and the need for temporary supplementary off-farm income support have all affected the timing of projected expansion and income generation when compared with the earliest business-plan forecasts.

Operational decisions have also been adapted in response to seasonal and welfare considerations, including the deferment of planned livestock expansion where prevailing conditions were not considered appropriate to responsible husbandry.

However, the enterprise has continued to develop operationally throughout this period, including through infrastructure deployment, livestock management, horticultural establishment, environmental management and the generation of substantial recorded labour input across the holding.

The restrained financial drawings associated with the enterprise should therefore be understood within the context of this establishment phase. Available resources have been prioritised towards infrastructure establishment, productive capacity, operational resilience and liquidity preservation, rather than household extraction during the most financially vulnerable stage of development.

Projected financial information, including profit and loss forecasts and cashflow projections, is provided at Annex IX. This progression is already underway in practice, including the recent establishment of poultry production on the holding.

The scale and operational nature of the enterprise are modest and proportionate, consistent with a phased development approach.

4.5 Temporary Nature of Proposal

The application seeks permission for a temporary rural enterprise dwelling.

This is a significant factor in the financial assessment. The temporary nature of the proposal allows the Local Planning Authority to:

- assess the continued operational and financial development of the enterprise over time; and
- assess whether the enterprise is progressing towards financial sustainability before any permanent dwelling is considered.

This approach is consistent with TAN 6 guidance for developing enterprises.

4.6 Conclusion on Financial Test

The enterprise is at an early stage of development and has not yet reached full operational income-generating capacity.

However, the evidence demonstrates that:

- the enterprise is active and established in operational terms;
- there is a clear and credible pathway to financial sustainability; and
- the scale and phased nature of the development are proportionate and appropriate.

The assessment of financial sustainability relates to the viability of the enterprise itself. The applicants' restrained overhead structure, phased operational approach, and low-impact off-grid model further support the ability of the enterprise to function sustainably at an appropriate scale during its establishment phase.

Accordingly, in the context of a temporary rural enterprise dwelling, the applicants consider that the proposal satisfies the Financial Test set out in TAN 6.

5. Other Dwellings Test

5.1 Policy Test

The other dwellings test requires consideration of whether there is an existing dwelling on the holding, or suitable accommodation in the locality, which could meet the identified functional need.

The purpose of the test is to ensure that new dwellings are only permitted where there is no realistic and suitable alternative to on-site accommodation.

5.2 Existing Dwellings on the Holding

There is no existing dwelling on the holding.

The applicants are currently residing on site in a temporary touring caravan, which does not have planning permission for permanent residential use and therefore does not represent a lawful or long-term residential solution.

There are no buildings on the holding suitable for conversion to residential use.

5.3 Availability of Accommodation in the Locality

It is acknowledged that residential properties may occasionally become available within the locality. However, even where such accommodation exists, it would not meet the identified functional requirement.

In addition, reliance on rented accommodation would introduce a disproportionate financial burden during the establishment phase of the enterprise, diverting limited operational resources away from infrastructure, productive capacity, and enterprise development. Such arrangements would therefore neither meet the operational requirements of the holding nor represent a sustainable alternative.

As demonstrated in Section 2, the functional need at Oak Court Farm is characterised not only by the requirement for rapid response, but by the need for regular and readily available on-site presence in order to detect and respond to time-critical events affecting livestock welfare, containment, and infrastructure.

Accommodation located off-site would not provide the level of operational availability required for the proper functioning of the enterprise. In many cases, incidents would not be detected at all, and where they were detected, the delay associated with travelling to the holding would result in an unacceptable level of risk.

5.4 Limitations of Off-Site Living

Living in nearby accommodation would not address the core operational requirement of the enterprise.

The functional need arises from:

- the need for regular and readily available on-site presence together with timely intervention;
- the need for ongoing monitoring during unstable conditions; and
- the absence of reliable remote detection mechanisms.

These requirements cannot be met through off-site residence, even where properties are geographically close.

5.5 Conclusion on Other Dwellings Test

There is no existing dwelling on the holding, and no suitable building available for conversion.

Accommodation in the locality would not meet the identified operational requirement, as it would not provide the level of availability required for the proper functioning of the enterprise.

Accordingly, the applicants consider that the proposal satisfies the Other Dwellings Test set out in TAN 6.

6. Conclusion

This Rural Enterprise Dwelling Appraisal has assessed the proposal against the key tests set out in TAN 6.

The evidence demonstrates that:

- there is a clear functional need for one or more workers to be readily available at most times on the holding, arising from the need for regular and readily available on-site presence in managing livestock, poultry, infrastructure, environmental stewardship activities, and time-critical operational risks;
- the enterprise generates a sustained labour requirement equivalent to more than two full-time roles overall, including in excess of one full-time equivalent role directly attributable to agricultural activity;
- the enterprise is active and operational, with a clear and credible pathway towards financial sustainability consistent with its phased establishment and development; and
- there is no existing dwelling on the holding, nor any suitable alternative accommodation in the locality capable of meeting the identified operational requirement.

The proposal relates to a temporary rural enterprise dwelling, which is proportionate to the current stage of development and consistent with the approach set out in TAN 6 for developing rural enterprises. Its modest scale, temporary nature and reversible characteristics also ensure that the identified functional need can be met without prejudicing the openness or wider strategic purposes of the Green Barrier, as discussed within the accompanying Planning Support Statement (PSS).

Taken together, the evidence demonstrates that the proposal satisfies the relevant policy tests within TAN 6 and that on-site accommodation is essential for the proper functioning, management and stewardship of the enterprise.