

Building a Home on Agricultural Land

My partner and I bought a piece of agricultural land four years ago (we used it for business a couple of years prior) and now hope to build a home on site. I breed rare pigs, while my partner is a tree surgeon. We recently had equipment stolen and lost all but one of a litter of piglets. We've considered a log cabin/mobile home as a possible option, and whatever the resulting house it should be as eco-friendly as possible. What are our chances of gaining planning permission on agricultural land?

Without knowing any specific details of the site itself or the local authority area it is located within, it's difficult to give any detailed guidance in respect of local planning policy; however, I would suggest that Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7): Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, is a key policy germane to your proposal. Whilst residential development in open countryside is generally difficult to obtain, Annex A of PPS7 refers to special circumstances where development of an isolated residential dwelling may be justified when accommodation is required to enable full-time agricultural workers to live at, or in the immediate vicinity of, their work place.

When submitting an application for an 'agricultural worker's dwelling' under PPS7, you would need to demonstrate that you satisfy the tests set out within Annex A. These tests require the applicant to demonstrate:

- A functional need for such property, as well as evidence that this cannot be met through the existing housing stock in the area or by conversion of existing buildings.
- The business to which the need relates has been established for three years and has been profitable for two.
- Other planning considerations are met, such as landscaping, access etc.

Obtaining planning permission for such a dwelling requires a robust and detailed case to demonstrate a functional need. If you lost the pigs due to the theft, PPS7 outlines that 'the protection of livestock from theft or injury by intruders may contribute on animal welfare grounds to the need for a new agricultural dwelling, although it will not by itself be sufficient to justify one'. I would agree with the proposed use of a log cabin/mobile home, as this would be a far less permanent feature. The use of green technologies may also help your case.