

HEARING STATEMENT - LOCAL REVIEW BODY

**THIS PAPER RELATES TO
ITEM 5k
ON THE AGENDA**

**NEW DWELLING FOR FARM WORKER AT
HARRYLAYOCK FARM, SOLSGIRTH DOLLAR FK14 7NE**

The Planning application for a new dwelling at Harrylayock Farm was refused by the planning authority, under delegated powers, on the grounds that '*the need for the proposed house to be located in the countryside has not been satisfactorily demonstrated.*'

It is our view that the need for the proposed house to be located in the countryside has been satisfactorily demonstrated in the content of the labour justification report submitted with the application. The labour report identifies the requirement for 5 full time + 1 part time personnel to run the combined farm business at Gibsley & Harrylayock.

At present the farm business is run from one farmhouse at Gibsley Farm occupied by Stan & Heather Smith. Stan works full time on the farm and Heather is part time. Their son also works full time on the farm. Their son & his family have now moved to Alloa, due to the lack of affordable housing in close proximity to the farmland, and he commutes to the farm.

The labour report demonstrates there is a shortfall of at least 2 full time farm workers to effectively manage the combined farmland & these farm workers require lodgings in close proximity to the farmland. The refusal makes reference to an existing dwelling at Harrylayock which the applicant is, in fact, not able to use to house farm workers. Even if the existing house at Harrylayock were available for a farm worker to occupy there would still be a full time labour shortfall which demonstrates justification for an additional farm worker dwelling.

An additional house for a farm worker is essential to the ongoing success of the farming business. The physical separation of the two farmland areas, the current farmhouse at Gibsley and the suitability of the site at Harrylayock present an ideal opportunity to secure appropriate farm worker housing at Harrylayock. House prices in nearby Saline are cost prohibitive to both prospective farm workers and the farm business and a new farm worker dwelling represents the only way of attracting additional full time labour.

The 6km separation of the distinct farmland areas presents numerous logistical issues which affect the ability of the farm business to operate efficiently, as well as presenting significant issues with security. A farm worker dwelling at Harrylayock would ensure that both sites can be quickly reached from either location.

Due to the labour requirements to adequately manage Gibsley & Harrylayock farm it is our view that at least one new dwelling for a farm worker is fully justified in this instance. The availability of the garden ground at Harrylayock and the absence of any farm worker residing at Harrylayock represents the best opportunity to create a new farm worker dwelling for the farm business to attract additional full time labour.

The applicants respect the need for Planning controls in Rural areas. For them the countryside is not just a home but a livelihood and where they operate their business.



Agriculture like many other businesses has and will continue to go through many changes to which the farming community has to adapt. We have provided a detailed report from the Scottish Agricultural College which shows the farming business and the daily operations required to keep it running.

A labour justification report which highlights a shortfall in resources would be more than adequate justification in neighbouring council areas, which are underpinned by the same Scottish Planning Policy and similar countryside development control. The planning decision to refuse the application undermines Employment policy and the applicants desire to create additional employment opportunities.

The applicants are happy to work with the Planning and Roads departments to come to an agreeable solution and plan of action if the application is approved.

