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What is an 'agricultural tie' and when is it applied?

Many commercial activities in the countryside will require the presence of a full-time employee, which can only be achieved by providing a full-time employee. A common example would be in certain types of businesses where it is essential for somebody to be on hand 24 hours a day 1

Generally speaking, local authorities will resist proposals for new homes in the countryside. However, in situations where there is a general policy to normally grant planning permission for a new home if it is subject to an occupancy condition to restrict its use to agricultural purposes, they will accept an occupancy condition to restrict its use to agricultural dependents.

This condition, known as an agricultural tie, allows for the development of new homes in the countryside, while preventing these from being used as holiday dwellings.

The downside to occupancy conditions

While agricultural ties have proven a very successful way of supporting the rural economy, they do have their downsides, which come into play when it comes to sell the property.

This is because the condition restricts the market of potential buyers who are able to comply, which has the impact of reducing the value of the property, normally by about 30 per cent. Given that tied properties are often located in high-value rural locations, this impact can be substantial.

Further, in situations where the original commercial activity has ceased, and depending on the wording of the condition, it may be impossible for any purchaser to comply.

