

Planning Support Statement

Full planning application for
change of use
from agricultural land to a private dog exercise facility
on a field adjacent to the (A636), Denby Dale, Huddersfield

1. The Site

1.1 The proposed Dog Exercise Area is a field (53.57858° N, 1.64212° W) just off the main Wakefield Road (A636), Denby Dale, Huddersfield. The field is on the outskirts of Denby Dale, at Lower Putting Mill. The proposed dog exercise area is shown by the red line in the Location Plan & Site Plan. It is approx 2 acres/0.8 hectares bounded by a stone wall on one side and 6ft high poultry fencing erected and installed for our previous organic egg business on all the other sides. There are 2 storage containers in the field, situated next to the entrance. The containers have been there for over 20 years and have served multiple purposes over the years including storage for animal feed and a shelter for sheep, chickens and horses. The River Dearne runs adjacent to the field. The land has low level agricultural value and is owned by me, the applicant.



1.2 Access for the dog exercise area will be off the A636, down a lane towards Lower Putting Mill and parking will be in the field through an existing metal gate on the right hand side of the lane. It is intended that users will open the gate, drive into the field, park in the entrance on the recycled road planings (hard standing), close the gate behind them and then unload their dogs in the safety of the field. The entrance already has a suitable recycled road planings surfacing, which will easily allow 2 cars to manoeuvre and park safely.



The lane, off Wakefield Road (A636)
leading down to the gate at the bottom
on the right hand side

1.3 We strongly believe the noise created from vehicles passing along the A636 is more of a disturbance and a nuisance to any neighbouring property than this proposal could ever be.

2. Relevant planning History

2.1 The last main use of the site was for our organic egg business, Pingle Cluck Organic Eggs. This field contained a large 15m wooden shed on skids and 500 laying hens. Very sadly we had to close the business in 2021 however the land has since been used for sheep and horse grazing and hay making. We also walk our own dog around the field and often invite friends to bring their dogs too.

2.2 Due to us previously operating an organic, free range egg production business, it means that we already have the appropriate fencing, gates, shelters and parking area in place to offer our facility to the local community with minimal impact or disruption to the environment.

3. The proposal

3.1 We would like to open a dog exercise field mainly for professional dog walkers during the week and the general public on a weekend. Please note this would be our second dog exercise area on the farm. We opened up our first dog exercise area, subsequently called the Pooch Park on 1st September 2023 after receiving planning permission in August 2022 and it took off immediately. The Pooch Park has now been open 5 months and we have noticed 2 trends that we would like to address with a second dog exercise area if possible. The first trend is that weekends at The Pooch Park are fully booked with a waiting list therefore a second field would help to relieve this issue, allowing more people to book on a weekend. The second trend is the rapid and continuous increase in professional local dog walkers. We have been approached by several professional local dog walkers to ask if we can provide a safe field for them to use during the week so that they don't have to drive all the way to Blacker Hall Farm in Wakefield, which is where

they currently go. According to this type of user, The Pooch Park is very difficult to access with a large number of dogs because we have 2 narrow gates to navigate through and a long walkway down some steps, which isn't ideal with lots of excited dogs!

3.2 The new site would be ideal for professional dog walkers. Professional dog walkers really struggle moving lots of dogs between the car and the field. This proposal will allow the handler to drive into the field and close the gate, then release the dogs straight from the car without having to worry about roads, cars, gates, people or livestock. There is no other facility like this in the area - not even Blacker Hall Farm has parking within the field.

3.3 Although the site is adjacent to the River Dearne, this field gets wet but has never flooded therefore we don't think that a flood risk assessment and evacuation plan is necessary.

3.4 In terms of the access and parking, access and parking for the dog exercise area will be from the A636, down a lane towards Lower Putting Mill and through an existing metal gate on the right hand side of the lane directly into the field. It is intended that users will open the gate, drive into the field, park in the entrance, close the gate behind them and unload their dogs safely. The entrance already has a suitable recycled road plainings surface, which is suitable for 2 cars to manoeuvre and park safely.



3.5 For the avoidance of any doubt, there will be no floodlighting or similar installation.

3.6 The two storage units will be retained

4. The Business & Operation

4.1 The offer is simply the use of the site for one hour at a time for private hire use. We expect one handler to turn up in one van for each session or one car for a general public session. This is what we have experienced over the last 5 months with the Pooch Park. Occasionally 2 cars do arrive for one booking but this is very infrequent.

4.2 The business will utilise an online booking system and once booked confirmation and site access details will be sent to the customer via email or text system.

4.3 It is anticipated that the professional handler will have regular slots every week. Just to get an idea of the type of need and usage, we have spoken to a couple of local dog walking businesses in the village and they have expressed an interest to use the field for an hour between 2-5 times a week. We anticipate that we will be able to attract 3-4 local dog walking businesses to use the field on a regular basis, therefore usage is going to be minimal during the week.

4.4 The maximum number of dogs will need to be 10 to make it viable for a professional dog walker who can have between 6-10 dogs per session.

4.5 The proposed hours of operation will match the Pooch Park - 08:00 to 17:00 on each day of the week from November through to February inclusively and from 07:00 to 20:00 hours from March through to October inclusively.

4.6 Dog waste will be picked up by the user and taken home, as per the Pooch Park.

4.7 It is expected that users will drive to the field but even if every session was booked on a weekend day, this would only amount to one, maybe two cars using the area every hour between the hours provided above.

5. Planning Policy

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory Development plan for Kirklees is the Local plan (adopted 27th feb 2019).

5.2 The site is set within Green Belt land as allocated in the Kirklees local plan (2019)

5.3 The site is set within the Kirklees Wildlife Habitat Network Combined.

5.4 Relevant KLP Policy

LP1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development

LP2 - Place Shaping

LP10 - Supporting the rural economy

LP21 - Highway Safety

LP22 - Parking provision

LP24 - Design

LP27 - Flood Risk

LP30 - Biodiversity & Geodiversity

LP47 - Healthy, active and safe lifestyles

LP48 - Community facilities and services

LP51 - Local Air Quality

LP52 - Protection & Improvement of Environmental Quality

LP56 - Facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and cemeteries

10.4 Relevant National Planning Policy Framework

Chapter 2 - Achieving sustainable development

Chapter 4 - Decision Making

Chapter 12 - Achieving well designed places

Chapter 13 - Protecting Green Belt land

Chapter 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Chapter 15 - Conserving & Enhancing the Natural Environment

6. Relevant planning Matters

6.1 Principle of Development & Visual Amenity

We believe that the proposed use for dog exercising, is considered outdoor recreation. We, the applicants and landowners will operate and manage the whole operation on a daily basis to reduce activity and movement around the site.

The proposal doesn't require any material changes and the area is already fenced from our organic egg business. The field also contains 2 shelters, that have been in situ for well over 20 years and used for a variety of purposes including a shelter for chickens, sheep and horses along with the storage of animal food.

6.2 Impact on Residential Amenity

The proposed hours of operation are during daylight hours only, with the site closed overnight.

Opening hours will be 08:00 to 17:00 on each day of the week from November through to February inclusively. From 07:00 to 20:00 on each day of the week from March through to October inclusively.

We will limit the max no of dogs to 10 at any one time.

There shall be no issues in terms of noise and odour. The proposed opening hours of use of the site are as described above. However, we do understand that this will need to form part of a condition, as will the number of dogs on site at any one time.

It is not considered that this proposal would increase vehicular activity levels to the point where this would be materially more harmful than the levels of noise and disturbance caused by vehicles travelling along the Wakefield Road (A636).

As no impactful operational development is coming forward and for the avoidance of doubt there is no lighting to come forward, there are no issues regarding residential amenity. There shall be no overlooking and no loss of privacy due to the proposed development. We will also plant 10 native trees along the lane fence line, which will provide a natural screen and attract local wildlife.

6.3 Impact on Highway Safety

Trip Generation

The proposed change of use will not lead to any increase in on street parking given the availability of the parking area within the site.

Traffic generation as part of the proposal could only amount to two vehicles per hour on a worst case scenario. Although there would be some trips generated with the proposals, these would be discounted by existing trips from the previous land use and would not be considered to be sufficient as to have severe impact on the operation or efficiency of the local highway network.

Access & Car Park

Access and parking is off a very quiet lane, not directly from the A636. Please refer to the Site Plan.

6.4 Other Matters

Ecology

The field is set within the Kirklees Wildlife Habitat Network. However we haven't commissioned a preliminary ecological assessment to assess the impact our development may have because the company that did our last one for application no: 2022/90502 (The Pooch Park some 400m down the road) said that it wasn't necessary because we had chickens, sheep and horses grazing the land, which would pretty much write off any kind of ecological value the land may have. In any case we went through with it because it was requested in our pre planning application advice and the results were as expected - nothing to report so please can I beg you not to request another one for this application. This site is currently grazed by sheep and horses, so it will have minimal ecological value.

Furthermore, due to the past and current use of the site, we believe this development will increase the biodiversity net gain without doing anything. We believe that a limited number of dogs per day will have a much lesser impact on biodiversity than either 500 hens, 30 sheep or 2 horses that have use of the field for 24 hours a day. However in order to make sure that there is a definite and obvious biodiversity net gain we will plant 10 native trees within the field.

Please see the state of the field below only 2 years ago with 500 chickens using it 24/7. As you can see the chickens destroyed the land and any form of life on it.



Flood Risk/Works to the River

Although the site is adjacent to the River Dearne, this field gets wet but has never flooded therefore we don't think that a flood risk assessment and evacuation plan is necessary.

Community Benefit, Need & Support

We undertook community consultation for our first dog park and received overwhelming support - the details are attached to this application so we know that the local community are dog lovers and behind our proposals to improve facilities for dog owners. We set up an online survey back in 2021 and received 191 responses, 189 were in favour and 2 were against. We have also included the detailed feedback from each respondent to say why a dog park is needed/not needed in Denby Dale.

We have received several verbal requests from local professional dog walkers for a field and I'm sure we can secure letters if needed.

The creation of a dog exercise facility in this rural setting will help support the rural community as per the aims of LP10 of the KLP.

LP47; LP48; LP56; LP63 will also be supported. The facility will create an environment which supports healthy, active and safe communities and reduces inequality. We believe that the openness of the Green Belt will be preserved and there is no conflict with the purposes of including land within it. Finally we believe that we have a well-designed new and improved open space, that can be used for recreation and enjoyment.

Denby Dale does not have many safe and secure, green open spaces that are available for use yet more and more houses continue to be built. This proposal would provide a much needed facility with minimal impact and/or change to the openness of the Green Belt.

Climate Change

The amenity is located in a large Parish that has a number of dog walkers. The nearest similar facility is at Blacker Hall farm in Wakefield, which is 16 mins and 12kms away. This proposal would support local businesses and reduce driving time, therefore reducing carbon emissions.

Supporting Local Business & The Economy

This proposal will help the local economy by supporting local businesses. Currently our professional dog walkers are travelling to Wakefield to use their facilities.

Local farmers are also massively in favour of this development because it will help reduce the amount of attacks they have to witness on their livestock. North Yorkshire Police say "Not only does sheep worrying inflict suffering and distress on the animals, the impact of these attacks has a devastating effect for the farming community, both financially and mentally"