
PLANNING STATEMENT

**CHANGE OF USE OF AGRICULTURAL LAND TO SUI
GENERIS USE FOR PRIVATE DOG WALKING AND
TRAINING WITH ASSOCIATED MINOR WORKS**

**LAND AT WOOD BOTTOM ROAD
NETHERTON
HUDDERSFIELD**

NOVEMBER 2025

Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared to support a planning application for the change of use of agricultural (grazing) land to a sui generis use for private dog walking and training with some associated minor works such as fencing and vehicle hardstanding.

Summary of the proposed development

The proposed site is to be used for the private exercising and training of dogs in a controlled environment. Minor associated works will involve boundary treatments and the creation of a crushed stone area of hardstanding for vehicles.

The site is located to the south of Healey Houses on agricultural land (already contained within defined hedgerow boundaries) to the north of Wood Bottom Road. Approximately 100 metres to the west is a large factory complex, with dwellings at Healey Houses approximately 100 metres to the north and dwellings at Siskin Gardens approximately 100 metres to the north-west. A single dwelling lies within woodland approximately 100 metres to the south and Granby Farm lies approximately 100 metres to the east.

The land is flat (although at a slightly lower level than Wood Bottom Road) with several existing structures on site. Parking will be available for a maximum of four vehicles. Entry to the site will be via a coded keypad and bookings will be made on-line.

The facility will be open Monday to Sunday (and on Bank Holidays) between the hours of 08:00 until 20:00 (April to September inclusive) and 08:00 to 19:00 (October to March inclusive).

The site is located in the green belt in the development plan.

Planning context

National planning policy is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2025.

In relation to the proposed development, the site of which lies within the green belt, the most relevant section of the NPPF is Section 13: “Protecting Green Belt land”.

At paragraph 153 it states that –

When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

However, paragraphs 154 and 155 outline exceptions which may be allowed. As the application relates primarily to a change of use of the land then paragraph 154 h) (v) applies -

Other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are

.....

v. material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and

.....

At Section 6: “Building a strong, competitive economy”, the NPPF states at paragraph 88 (Supporting a prosperous rural economy) states –

Planning policies and decisions should enable:

a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, new buildings;

b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;

c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and

d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

Paragraph 89 continues -

Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads.....

Local planning policy is provided primarily by the Kirklees Local Plan (LP). National planning policy on green belts is deemed to provide the necessary policy guidance on this issue.

The relevant policies within the LP are held to include -

LP1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development

LP2 Place shaping

LP10 Supporting the rural economy

LP21 Highway safety and access

LP22 Parking

LP24 Design

LP56 – Facilities for outdoor sport, recreation and cemeteries

The business model

The applicant's Business Model is set out in the annotation to the supporting plan "Proposed Block plan" and, as such, it is not intended to duplicate that text here. However, further details are set out below.

The facility will be booked online for private use in hourly time slots. This allows owners and their dogs the opportunity to enjoy freedom and the outdoors within a secure field. The booking system will include a confirmation email given to the customer of a gate code to gain access to the site. The applicant's contact number will be available to customers and she will be the on-call emergency contact at all times. The facility will also be used for the training of dogs under the direct supervision of the applicant.

Parking for the site will be on a hardstanding and there will be four off-road parking spaces provided. Access to the site will be from a widened existing field access which has good sight lines and visibility along Wood Bottom Road. The access point will be wide enough to ensure that no vehicle will have to wait on Wood Bottom Road to enter the site if another vehicle is exiting the site.

The proposed scheme will create one full-time job, with a potential for a further two full-time jobs as the business becomes established. There will also be a positive effect on the supply chain, including the need for maintenance of the site and grass cutting, plus services associated with the business, such as an accountant, website host etc.

Development appraisal

The land is currently low-grade agricultural grassland that has been used most recently for grazing horses.

It is considered that the primary material planning considerations relate to the following issues –

1. The principle of development in the green belt
2. The impact on residential amenity
3. Access and vehicle movements

1. Principle of development in the green belt

In the context of Section 13 of the NPPF, it is conceded that the proposed development represents “inappropriate development” for the purposes of para 153. However, it is also contended that the proposed use and associated minor works fall within the exception as outlined in paragraph 154 h) (v).

Firstly, it is not unusual for the care of dogs, whether it be for boarding or day kennels or for private exercising of dogs, to be located in rural areas (for example, similar facilities for private dog walking and training have been granted planning permission at Chain Road, Marsden and Moor Top Lane, Flockton). Due to the need to have an adequate separation distance from residential properties to minimise noise and disturbance and to allow for outdoor exercise for dogs, such needs often work

against urban locations. It is a fact that appropriate locations tend to be predominantly within the green belt for this type of activity.

Secondly, the proposed development represents a diversification of agricultural land that has been only used for the grazing of horses.

Thirdly, the scheme has been designed to reduce the visual impact of the proposed development on the openness of the green belt, as far as is practicable. The use of rural and agricultural boundary treatments etc and crushed stone means that the appearance of the area will not be incongruous in such a rural location.

As such, the principle of the proposed development is held to comply with Section 13 paragraph 154 (h (v)) of the NPPF.

With regard to policy LP56 of the LP, it is held that the openness of the green belt will be preserved and that there is no conflict with the purposes of including land within the green belt. The proposed development, in terms of scale, is no more than is reasonably required for the proper functioning of the enterprise or the use of the land to which it is associated and is unobtrusively located (set below the level of the adjoining road). It has been designed so as not to introduce a prominent urban element into a countryside location, and the impact of the improved access and car parking areas uses a treatment that is appropriate to a rural area. It should be noted that a good level of landscaped screening already exists around the site.

However, in order to protect the interests of the green belt, the applicant has no objection to a condition being attached to any planning approval that requires the reversion of the land and buildings to an agricultural use should the business use cease for whatever reason.

2. Impact on residential amenity

It is contended that the issue in relation to residential amenity is the potential for noise or disturbance caused by dogs (barking etc) and the small number of vehicle movements associated with the movement of dogs to and from the site.

The nearest properties to the land are some 100m away to the north, east, north-west, and a single dwelling in woodland to the south. As the prevailing wind in this location is a westerly, it is held that any noise impacts are likely to be mitigated on windy days by noise being carried away from the site toward open land to the east. It is also considered that the background noise from the existing factory premises to the west (and the vehicle movements associated with this use) will also mitigate any noise emissions from the site, particularly in respect of properties on Siskin Gardens.

It is therefore held that residential properties are far enough away from the proposed use to not be significantly affected by any outdoor or other activity on the site. Dogs will be supervised at all times by their owners / handlers (not like boarding kennels) and dogs will not be left unsupervised in the exercise area.

Visually, the site is considered to be far enough away from properties for the visual impact to be minimal and this is further mitigated by the lower level of the site and by existing natural boundary treatment of hedgerows etc.

3. Access and vehicle movements

The access, parking arrangements, and level of vehicular activity for the proposed development are annotated on the supporting plan “Car parking detail” and, as such, it is not intended to duplicate that text here.

However, it should be noted that the proposed widened access utilises the existing field access and gate and that sight lines are generally good on this lightly-trafficked rural road where speeds are generally low. The access is designed so that vehicles can enter the site even if a vehicle is exiting the site, thus ensuring that there is no waiting on Wood Bottom Road. As a result, it is considered that the low level of activity associated with the use would have little impact on highway safety in this location.

Conclusion

To conclude, it is considered that the proposed development will have a very limited impact on the green belt, on residential amenity, and on highway safety, and so is capable of approval subject to any necessary and reasonable conditions.

The positive benefits that would accrue from the proposed development would include agricultural diversification and the prospering of rural enterprise and job creation. It is held that these benefits outweigh any very limited impacts that may occur as a result of the proposed development.
