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## Planning Statement

For the demolition and replacement of existing buildings to provide dog training kennels (Commercial)

At Clarks Farm, Belchamp Walter, CO10 7AP

Prepared on behalf of Mr A & Mrs S Hogsbjerg





## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This application is submitted on behalf of Mr A and Mrs S Hogsbjerg to Braintree District Council for the “demolition and replacement of existing buildings to provide dog training kennels and ancillary space” at Land at Clarks Farm, Belchamp Walter, CO10 7BE (“the site”).
- 1.2 Clarks Farm is currently an active farming unit which has been in the Hogsbjerg Family for over 50 years. They currently operate as an arable farming enterprise with a clear focus on regenerative farming and enhancement of local biodiversity. The area of land and buildings proposed are currently structurally unsafe and of no use to the existing farming enterprise.
- 1.3 The proposal will provide 36 dog training kennels spread across three separate buildings. The kennels will be purpose built and comply with all dog training regulations.
- 1.4 This statement will provide justification for the proposal, including why it is considered to accord with the provisions of the development plan, which comprises the saved policies of the Braintree Local Plan 2033 and relevant policy within the National Planning Policy Framework (“the NPPF”).

## 2.0 The proposal

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- 2.1.1 The application is for the proposed change of use of existing agricultural field and the demolition and rebuild of existing agricultural buildings to provide three blocks of training kennels and the necessary reception area, vet / grooming area and welfare area to include personnel cleaning and eating facilities.
- 2.1.2 The proposal will include the demolition of the existing four structurally unsafe farm buildings to be replaced with three identical buildings for the housing of dog training kennels and a building to house the following; reception area; vet and grooming room; staff welfare area.
- 2.1.3 The existing access to the farmyard and existing buildings will be utilised, being fenced to provide secure access and separate it from the main farmyard. The buildings will be built using red brick with red tile roofs in keeping with other buildings located on the farm. The front of the kennel blocks will be open using metal dog kennel panels providing an internal run space for the dogs whilst remaining under cover. To the back of the run area will be a specialist built internal dog kennel which will be insulated.



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- 2.1.4 The proposal will operate a mainly drop off and pick up service for dog owners resulting in minimal traffic to the site, with the main access being used almost solely for staff with the exception of the occasional client wishing to view the premises which will be done on an appointment only basis and will be normal working hours only.
- 2.1.5 The proposal will provide a staff welfare area to ensure biosecurity measures can be adhered to. The building will also provide a main reception / office area for staff to operate from and a room available for vet requirements and any grooming. This will also be built from red brick with red tile roof.
- 2.1.6 The buildings are all one storey and are as close to the existing layout and sizes of existing buildings as possible to allow for extremely minimal impact upon the landscape of the site.
- 2.1.7 The existing agricultural field will be utilised for the outdoor training of the dogs therefore will be fenced around the perimeter using 1.8m high stock fencing with wooden posts, again to minimise any impact upon the landscape.

### **2.2 The site**

- 2.2.1 The proposed site extends to approximately 5.2 acres and is located at Clarks Farm, Belchamp Walter.
- 2.2.2 The site will utilise the existing access point directly from the highway, there is an existing hardstanding area on the site which will be utilised for parking and manoeuvring. As mentioned previously there will be minimal access to the site, being almost solely staff access. The site will be fenced with featherboard fencing to allow a secure entrance from the farmyard.

### **2.3 Rationale**

- 2.3.1 The increased amount of time spent at home, particularly due to the shift in working patterns is believed to be the cause of a surge in pet ownership during 2021/2022. Statista reported that whilst pet ownership levels had previously remained stable at around 42-45% levels reached an unprecedented high of 62% in 2021/2022 with an estimated 13 million dogs living in homes. Along with this also came an increase in consumer spending on pets from an estimated 2.9 billion to roughly 8 billion pounds.
- 2.3.2 The increase in pet ownership also brings with it an increase in those wishing to have a well trained pet, this facility will provide an opportunity for people to have their dog trained by a competent handler ensuring the safety of the dogs.
- 2.3.4 There is an increasing need for farm diversification with increasing costs of farming and the loss of farming subsidies. The facility will provide a stable income separate to that of the main farming enterprise. It will also utilise an otherwise redundant area of unsafe farm buildings.



## 3.0 Summary of context provided by planning policies

### 3.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

3.1.1 The NPPF (Paragraph 28) advises that planning policies should support economic growth within rural areas, in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should, inter alia:

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

- support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres;

*The proposal to provide a dog training facility provides additional income revenues for the wider farming enterprise, allowing for on farm diversification.*

3.1.2 The NPPF (Paragraph 84) advises that planning policies 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; and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres;

- 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.

*The proposed change of use of an existing agricultural field to provide a safe and secure dog training facility allows for the diversification of the existing farming enterprise at Clarks Farm.*

### 3.2 Local Planning Policy

3.2.1 The local planning policies can be found within the saved policies of Braintree District Council 2033, with a main focus on Section 2 which covers the Braintree



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District.

### 3.2.2 Local Planning Policy LPP1 focussed on Development Boundaries.

It states that Development Boundaries Within development boundaries, development will be permitted where it satisfies amenity, design, environmental and highway criteria and where it can take place without material adverse detriment to the existing character and historic interest of the settlement.

Development outside development boundaries will be confined to uses appropriate to the countryside whilst also protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

*The proposal for a dog training facility inherently requires a rural location and therefore is required to be outside of settlement boundaries and typical areas of development. The proposal includes the demolition of redundant and unsafe farm buildings and the rebuilding of them to be in keeping with other buildings within the farm and the wider vicinity. There will be limited impact on the landscape and it is believed it will enhance the area which is currently in a poor state of repair. There is existing hardstanding which will be utilised. The field has been included within the agricultural farming practices and has had both combinable crops and also grass. The existing proposal would include laying the field down to grass therefore no material change to the land itself therefore no impact upon the diversity of the land or beauty of the countryside. The fencing to be used is typical within farming practices and is common within rural areas.*

### 3.2.3 LPP7 supports Rural Enterprise Outside development boundaries.

Proposals for small-scale commercial development, which involve the conversion and re-use of existing buildings that are of permanent and substantial construction and capable of conversion without complete re-building, will be considered acceptable subject to all the following criteria:

- a. The access and traffic generated by the development can be accommodated without adverse impact on the local road network
- b. There is no unacceptable impact on residential amenity
- c. There is no unacceptable impact on the character of the site or the surrounding countryside and its landscape value.

*The change of use of the existing farmland and buildings to provide a secure dog training facility which would predominantly use a collection and drop of service would limit the access to mainly staff, therefore would not generate any excess traffic to the area.*

### 3.2.4 LPP43 focusses on the parking provisions within developments stating that;



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Development will be required to provide vehicular and cycle parking in accordance with the Essex Vehicle Parking.

*There is existing hardstanding on the site which would be utilised for parking facilities.*

- 3.2.5 LPP47 promotes high standards of design and layout in all new developments.

The Council will promote and secure a high standard of design and layout in all new development and the protection and enhancement of the historic environment in order to:

- a. Respect and respond to the local context, especially in the District's historic areas, where development may affect the setting of listed buildings and other buildings of historic or architectural significance, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens, scheduled monuments and areas of high archaeological and landscape sensitivity
- b. Promote and encourage the contribution that heritage assets can make towards driving regeneration, economic development, tourism and leisure provision in the District
- c. Actively encourage local groups to formulate Local Lists of buildings and structures of historic or architectural significance
- d. Create built environments which are safe and accessible to everyone and which will contribute towards the quality of life in all towns and villages
- e. Create good quality built environments in commercial and business districts and in the public realm as well as in residential areas
- f. Be capable of meeting the changing future needs of occupiers
- g. Promote the sympathetic re-use of buildings, particularly where they make a positive contribution to the delivery of sustainable development and regeneration

*The physical alterations to the site are limited in that they are replacing existing buildings with minimal alterations to size and layout. All buildings will be built being mindful of remaining in keeping with the local area, all being out of red brick with clay tile roof. We have aimed to keep the buildings as close to the existing buildings in size and layout whilst ensuring the welfare of the dogs and staff in order to minimise disruption on the landscape.*

- 3.2.5 LPP52 states that the Council will seek a high standard of layout and design in all developments in the District and encourage innovative design where appropriate.

Planning permission will be granted where the relevant following criteria are met:

- a. The scale, layout, height and massing of buildings and overall elevation design should reflect or enhance the area's local distinctiveness and shall be in harmony with the character and appearance of the surrounding area; including their form, scale and impact on the skyline and the building line
- b. Buildings and structures should be of high architectural quality, be of a proportion, composition, scale and orientation that enhances, activates and appropriately defines the public realm and comprise details and materials





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that complement, but not necessarily replicate, the local architectural character

c. There shall be no unacceptable impact on the amenity of any nearby properties including on privacy, overshadowing, loss of light and overbearing impact

d. The public realm including buildings, open areas, circulation spaces, and other townscape and landscape features shall be of a high standard of design and materials and they shall be consistent with affordable long term maintenance which is appropriate to the character and historic value of the area

e. Designs shall be sensitive to the need to conserve and enhance local features of architectural, historic and landscape importance, particularly within Conservation Areas and in proximity to heritage assets

f. Development proposals will incorporate measures for environmental sustainability throughout the construction, occupation and demolition of the development; in relation to energy conservation, water efficiency, waste separation (internal and external), climate change, flood resilience and resistant construction and the use of materials with low overall energy requirements

g. Designs shall incorporate details of waste storage and collection arrangements, including provision for recycling, within the site to ensure that the impact on amenity and character are considered and recycling is optimised.

*The nature of the proposed change of use would bear strong resemblance to the current layout of the site, consequently the proposed alterations would ensure that the existing character and appearance of the site remained. The alterations to the field itself would be minimal with the erection of 1.8m high livestock fencing which is commonly used within farms.*

### 3.2.6 LPP67 is focussed on retaining the Landscape Character and Features

In its decision-making on applications, the Local Planning Authority will take into account the different roles and character of the various landscape areas in the District, and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, in order to ensure that any development permitted is suitable for the local context.

In doing so regard must be given to the hierarchy of designations as expressed in NPPF 2012 paragraph 113. At a landscape scale, Braintree is located primarily in the South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland National Character Area and this character assessment is relevant in considering applications for development.

Proposals for new development should be informed by, and be sympathetic to, the character of the landscape as identified in the District Council's Landscape Character Assessments. Proposals which may impact on the landscape such as settlement edge, countryside or large schemes will be required to include an assessment of their impact on the landscape and should not be detrimental to the distinctive



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landscape features of the area such as trees, hedges, woodlands, grasslands, ponds and rivers.

Development which would not successfully integrate into the local landscape will not be permitted. Where development is proposed close to existing features, it should be designed and located to ensure that the condition and future retention/management will not be prejudiced but enhanced where appropriate.

Additional landscaping including planting of native species of trees, hedgerows and other flora may be required to maintain and enhance these features. The restoration and enhancement of the natural environment will be encouraged through: Maximising opportunities for creation of new green infrastructure and networks in sites allocated for development Creating green infrastructure networks to link urban areas to the countryside, and creating and enhancing the biodiversity value of wildlife corridors.

Development proposals which result in harm to the setting of the AONB will not be permitted.

*The physical alterations required for the proposal mean that there will be some alteration to the landscape however the applicants have been mindful to retain the aesthetic of the landscape with the building materials being in keeping with the buildings within the farmyard. The proposal is not sited in any designated area.*

## 4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 The proposal would provide a safe and secure environment for a dog training facility something of particular importance with the rise in dog ownership since the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 4.2 The proposal positively supports the local rural economy, respects the character and quality of the surrounding landscape and enhances the natural landscape.
- 4.3 The proposal requires some physical alterations to the site, positively enhancing the existing use of the land as an agricultural grazing field and creates safe buildings as replacements to the existing dilapidated buildings. The proposal would not alter the appearance nor the character of the wider field itself.
- 4.4 The proposal will provide safe and secure dog training facility which will provide on farm diversification and also provide employment to the local area.
- 4.5 The proposed utilisation of a drop off and collection service will limit the vehicle use to the site, being mainly limited to staff.
- 4.6 The training will be done during daylight hours with no requirement for lighting other than within the buildings them self.
- 4.7 The site is already well screened from the main farmyard and dwelling however there will be the addition of featherboard fencing to the entrance of the site in order to





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minimise any disturbance from incoming farm traffic and ensure safety and welfare. The kennels have also been designed in such a way that the dogs view is over the rear countryside again limiting any disturbance that may be caused by additional on farm traffic.

- 4.8 It would provide an additional income revenue to the existing business.
- 4.9 It complies with national and local planning policies and has no significant adverse impacts.
- 5.0 Kennels are usually found in rural areas that provides an appropriate environment for the dogs and separation from surrounding residences so that there would not be the potential for there to be a noise nuisance. In view of the underlying planning policies that promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses, support rural development on a small scale by the NPPF, the Council's support for the proposal is sought.