

Your ref: PP-08716119  
Our ref: 1021-7 LMS MAG

13 May 2020

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**Submitted via Planning Portal**

Planning and Building Control Manager  
South Holland District Council  
Council Offices  
Priory Road  
Spalding PE11 2XE

Dear Sir

**DECOY HOLDINGS LTD**

**CHANGE OF USE OF AGRICULTURAL FIELD TO DOG EXERCISE FIELD,  
CREATION OF CAR PARK, ACCESS AND WOODEN SHELTER.  
DECOY FARM, SPALDING ROAD, CROWLAND, PE6 0LX**

We have been instructed by Decoy Holdings Ltd to submit a Full Planning Application for the change of use of an agricultural field to be used for the exercise of dogs, together with the ancillary development set out above. This letter forms part of the submission via the Planning Portal reference PP-08716119.

**DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

The application site consists of an existing agricultural field of poor quality and drainage, adjacent to the Spalding Road to the south of the Decoy Farm complex. The land has been used for many years for the grazing and schooling of horses. To the west of the site, there are a number of renewable energy and waste businesses that have grown up over the years. Planning permission has been granted (although this has subsequently lapsed) for a large commercial horticultural operation on land immediately west of the site. The land is all under the control of Decoy Holdings Ltd.

It is now proposed to use the field for the exercising of dogs on a commercial basis by providing a safe, fully enclosed 'arena' with a secure car park for up to 5 cars and small wooden shelter for dog owners to use when the weather is inclement.

Bookings for the use of the site will be made online and customers will be given a code for the electric gate to then use the facility for a pre-paid period. The site will be open every day of the year except Christmas Day between the hours of 8am and 5pm during the winter, and 7am to 8pm during the summer months. Customers will be able to hire the field for 55-minute time slots and there will be no more than 10 dogs allowed at any one time.

There are two dwellings approximately 185m to the north of the site and, of those, one is owned by the applicant and the occupier of the other has been consulted by the applicant in advance of the submission of the application and fully supports the proposal. Having regard to the distance to those nearest dwellings coupled with the prevailing wind direction, we consider that the occasional dog bark is unlikely to represent any detrimental impact on reasonable residential amenity. We, therefore, consider that the proposal accords with local plan Policy 2, 6).



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The level of vehicle movements generated by the proposal is very low, the volume of traffic on the Spalding Road, where the new access will be formed, is also low and there is good visibility in both directions.

Organised dog walking/exercising has now become an established industry, with companies now providing a service whereby dogs are picked up from clients' homes and then taken to a destination, often in the countryside for exercise etc. Accordingly, the proposal will simply provide a destination for an existing industry and, in the absence of this proposal, another destination in the open countryside would be utilised.

### **Flood Risk**

The site lies within Flood Zone 3a on the Environment Agency's Flood Maps, where there is considered to be a high probability of flooding. The annual probability of flooding is from river and coastal sources is considered to be less than 0.1% (1 in 1000 year). Dog exercising is outdoor recreation which is considered to be 'water compatible' in Table 1 of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). Outdoor recreation plus essential buildings represent 'appropriate development' in Flood Zone 3a, as set out in Table 2 of the PPG. There are only ever likely to be two or three people on site at any one time and the only building proposed is a wooden shelter. A Flood Warning and Evacuation Plan will be prepared and will be available in the wooden shelter.

### **Conclusions**

The proposal represents a form of rural diversification that will see the use of an area of poor-quality and poorly drained agricultural land used as a destination for an existing industry that caters for the needs of working people and their pet dogs. The proposal will have a light touch on the landscape and must be considered in light of the existing development on the adjacent Decoy Farm complex.

The nearest two dwellings, one of which is owned by the applicant, are in excess of 185m to the north and are unlikely to be impacted upon by the proposal.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

*Robert Doughty Consultancy Limited*

Lewis Smith MRTPI



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