SWANN EDWARDS
ARCHITECTURE

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT
AND
BUSINESS OPERATION PLAN

IN RELATION TO

CONVERSION OF EXISTING BUILDING FOR USE AS DOG DAYCARE

AT

BARN ADJACENT 8-9 GRANGE FARM
HOSPITAL ROAD
SUTTON BRIDGE

FOR

MRS M STONE

Job No. SE-2379 **October 2025**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement supports the full planning application for the conversion of an existing barn for use as dog daycare. The application site is located at barn adjacent 8-9 Grange Farm, Hospital Road, Sutton Bridge.

2.0 CONTEXT

2.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is located on the northern side of Hospital Road, approximately 1km east of the junction with East Bank. The area is characterised by sporadic dwellings arranged at fairly regular intervals along the length of Hospital Road.

The site comprises a detached barn positioned on the land to the immediate east of the existing dwelling at 8-9 Hospital Drove. The barn is a disused and redundant building. It is in a reasonable state of repair. The form of the barn is u-shaped, and is single-storey. There is post and rail fencing enclosing the site boundaries and an existing vehicular access in the southern corner of the site.

The site lies outside of any defined development boundary and is in Flood Zone 3 of the Environment Agency Flood Maps for Planning.



Figure 1: Aerial imagery of site

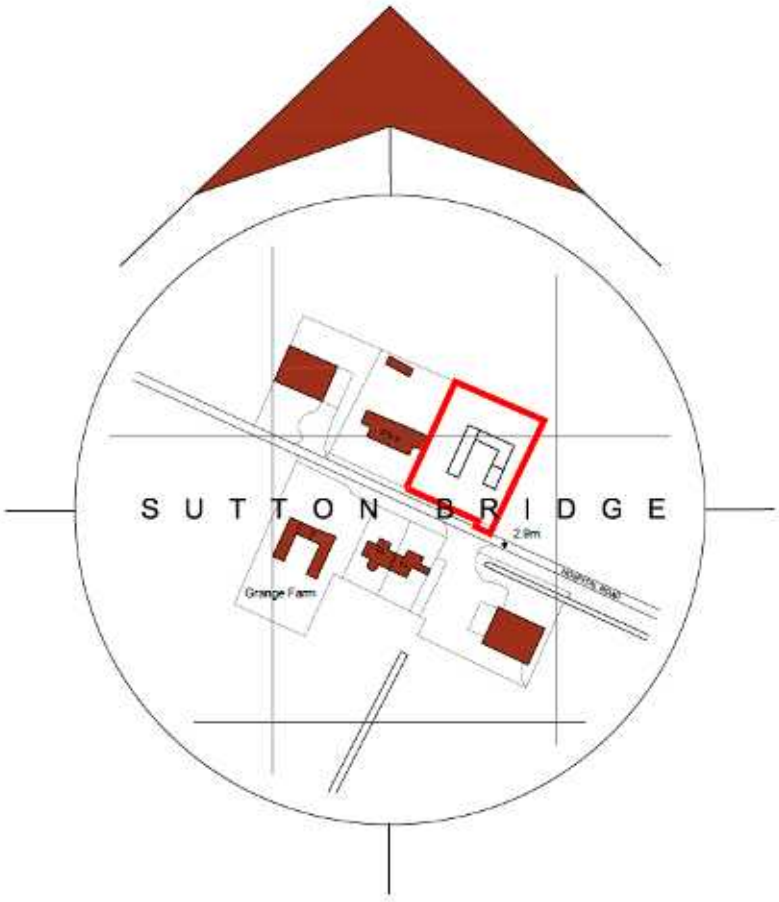

Figure 2: Location Plan

2.2 HISTORY

H18-0979-24 – Proposed conversion, extension and change of use of barn to kennels – Refused;

H18-0222-13 – Extensions and alterations to existing dwelling – Approved.

2.3 BACKGROUND

Planning permission for the conversion involving the extension and change of use of the existing barn to kennels was recently refused under reference number H18-0979-24. The application was refused for the following reasons:

1. *Policy 1 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (SELLP, 2019) states that development within the countryside is limited to that where it "is necessary to such a location and/or where it can be demonstrated that it meets the sustainable development needs of the area in terms of economic, community or environmental benefits". In this instance, the support towards the 'sustainability needs for the area' afforded by the proposal have not been put forward, with no evidence of such being demonstrated within the submission, and in any event, in this instance, they are not considered to be sufficient as to accord with Policy 1 in any event, when viewed in isolation.*

In context of this, the proposal to provide a business incorporating dog boarding and day care within this location, would not typically be considered necessary, nor appropriate. As such, the proposal does not strictly accord with the requirements of Policy 1 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) when viewed in principle.

Policy 7 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) relates to 'Improving South East Lincolnshire's Employment Land Portfolio'. This Policy details that: "New employment development/businesses or the extension of an existing business outside the above allocated employment sites will be supported provided that the proposal involves the reuse of previously developed land or the conversion/re-use of redundant buildings. Where it can be demonstrated that no suitable building capable of conversion/re-use is available or the re-use of previously developed land is not available or is unsuitable, proposals on non-allocated sites may be acceptable provided:"

In this instance, the proposal is for the conversion of an existing built form for its use as a business; however, the built form to be converted lies within an open countryside location. Within the 'Reasoned Justification' for Policy 7, paragraph 4.2.10 details that "National planning policy supports the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings in the Countryside for economic development. Therefore, the provision and expansion of Other Employment Sites, including those in the Countryside, will be supported where it can be demonstrated to be sustainable and consistent with the requirements of Policy 7. However, the desire to promote rural employment must be balanced with the need to protect the existing character of the Countryside". Paragraph 4.2.11 also details that "Policy 7 aims to ensure that growth happens in the right places (both from the market's perspective and to meet sustainability objectives) and will ensure that resources can be focused on delivering a small number of quality, attractive business locations. Together with other policies in this Local Plan, this approach helps ensure that the right infrastructure and conditions can be delivered to give businesses the confidence to invest in the area.

The proposal in this instance, albeit comprising the re-use and conversion of an existing barn, would result in a dog care and boarding business within an open countryside location. The site would not be readily accessible from other modes of transport beyond dependency of a private motor vehicle and as such, is evidently an unsuitable form of development for the context of the site, given the extensive vehicular movements identified within the submission, this being up to 20 movements per day. The proposal does not lie adjacent a settlement as required by para 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024), and in respect of alternative, outside settlement locations, the proposal fails to be "sensitive to its surroundings" or offer "opportunities to make a location more sustainable".

As such, the proposal seeks permission for the re-use of an existing building, to form a dog care and boarding business within an unsuitable countryside location. The proposal would be at direct conflict with Policy 1 and 7 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019), and would fail to accord with the provisions of Section 6 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). It is therefore considered that the proposal would not be acceptable in principle and should be refused for this reason.

2. *Policy 2 of the adopted South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (SELLP, 2019) states that proposals requiring planning permission for development will be permitted provided that sustainable development*

considerations are met, specifically in relation to size, scale, layout, density and impact on the amenity, trees, character and appearance of the area and the relationship to existing development and land uses. Policy 3 of the adopted South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (SELLP, 2019) states that development proposals will demonstrate how an acceptable design of development including residential amenity will be secured. Policy 30 of the adopted South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (SELLP, 2019) states that development proposals will not be permitted where they would lead to unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenities of the area.

The extension in terms of design, scale and its overall nature would result in a harmful impact to the character of the area. Due to the existing use of the barn, the current layout, design and appearance, which in part is formed through the 'u-shape' layout and style, is in keeping with the rural agricultural context of the area that it is located within.

The extension would remove this design feature, altering the natural form, layout and context; this coupled with the proposed change of use, would substantially erode this sense of agricultural character, changing the overall context, feel and design. Furthermore, the poor quality design fails to enhance or improve the area/existing barn and if approved, would appear harmful and out of character.

As a result of this, by virtue of its design, scale and nature, the extension would appear out of character and incongruous. Likewise, the resultant use would adversely impact the character of the area, introducing a somewhat commercial business that would create further harm to the impact of the character.

The proposal is not considered to be acceptable. The development should therefore be refused, being at conflict with Policies 2 and 3 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (SELLP, 2019) and Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024).

3. *Policies 2 and 3 of South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) sets out that residential amenity and the relationship to existing development and land uses is a main consideration when making planning decisions. Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) states that development should create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.*

   Policy 30 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019), relating to 'Pollution' details that "Development proposals will not be permitted where, taking account of any proposed mitigation measures, they would lead to unacceptable adverse impacts upon:...
   2. the amenities of the area; or
   3. the natural, historic and built environment;
   by way of:...
   5. noise including vibration..."
   Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024), relating to 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment', details under paragraph 187 that "Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions...".

It is considered that the proposal, comprising a minimum of 17 dogs (but likely to be notably in excessive of this number), would result in an unacceptable noise disturbance, and harm to the residential amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

It is considered that the resultant change of use, due to the high amount of dogs, people travelling to and from the site, proximity to residential properties, the extensive hours of operation and the lack of detail and infrastructure to limit the noise impacts, would give rise to an unacceptable adverse impact upon the residential amenities of neighbouring occupier's. Furthermore, this resultant use and impact would be at odds with the more tranquil character of such a countryside setting. As such, the proposal is considered to be at conflict with the provisions of Section 12 and 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024), and Policies 2, 3 and 30 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019).

2.4 PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks to convert the existing building to provide a facility for a dog day care business for up to 17 dogs. The business is predominantly for day care however the proposal is to include provision for a limited number of overnight stays of no more than 10 dogs. There are no proposed extensions or significant alterations to the building and all new openings will be kept to a minimum.

The works involved in the conversion are generally internal, the most significant of which is including insulation to the building, providing an isolation room (for dogs who may show signs of illness), and the creation of a wet room area where dogs can be cleaned and groomed after their daily walk.

Access to the site is via the existing access point within the southern corner of the site. This will lead to a parking and turning area positioned to the front of the building. The access, parking and turning area will remain grassed as per the current arrangement.

2.5 PRINCIPLE

Policy 1 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (Local Plan) specifies that development in the countryside is restricted to proposals that are necessary for a rural location and/or can demonstrate that they address the area's sustainable development needs, whether these are economic, community, or environmental in nature.

Policy 7 of the Local Plan relates to 'Improving South East Lincolnshire's Employment Land Portfolio'. LP7 states that "New employment development/businesses or the extension of an existing business outside the above allocated employment sites will be supported provided that the proposal involves the reuse of previously developed land or the conversion/re-use of redundant

buildings. Where it can be demonstrated that no suitable building capable of conversion/re-use is available or the re-use of previously developed land is not available or is unsuitable, proposals on non-allocated sites may be acceptable provided:"

The first reason for refusal in the previous application relates to there being a conflict with the above policies in that it was not demonstrated that the proposal was necessary in this location and that it was not readily accessible or sustainable in terms of there being a reliance on private modes of vehicular transport.

Where the previous submission was more of a 'lighter touch' the current application is supported by a Business Plan which is set out in Section 5 of this report.

The Business Plan is clear in that there is a unique selling point for this proposal which is that it promotes socialisation. The nature of the proposed dog daycare facility is fundamentally different from conventional urban or containment-based daycare models. Its operational philosophy is centred on providing dogs with access to open, natural, and stimulating environments that allow for safe, guided social interaction and physical exercise. This model relies heavily on outdoor space and tranquillity, both of which are inherent to a countryside location.

The facility's core activities—structured group walks, supervised outdoor play, and socialisation sessions—require secure open areas where dogs can move freely under controlled supervision. Urban or suburban environments generally lack the necessary scale or safety for such activities. Limited space, proximity to roads, and high levels of noise or disturbance in built-up areas would compromise both animal welfare and operational safety. In contrast, this countryside site provides the space, quiet, and natural setting essential for maintaining animal wellbeing and for managing groups of dogs responsibly.

The low-intensity, low-impact nature of this proposal aligns well with a rural setting. Unlike kennels or commercial boarding facilities, the site would not generate significant noise, traffic, or environmental disruption. Instead, it integrates naturally within the countryside, using the fenced land to the rear for controlled activities while maintaining a peaceful atmosphere. This makes it more appropriate and sustainable in a rural context than within or adjacent to residential areas, where such activities could lead to amenity conflicts.

The philosophy of group socialisation—in which dogs spend their day interacting and exercising together rather than being crated or confined—demands a setting that promotes freedom of movement and calm behaviour. Rural surroundings provide sensory enrichment and reduce stress levels in dogs, leading to better behaviour and improved welfare outcomes. These benefits cannot be replicated within the constraints of an urban environment.

Finally, the strong client demand and existing waiting list provide clear evidence of a significant community need for high-quality, welfare-focused dog care. The popularity of the facility demonstrates that clients value its approach and are willing to travel to access it, confirming that a countryside location is practical and acceptable to the user base. The need to drive to the site does not appear to be a barrier; clients actively choose this service despite the rural location, highlighting the importance of the facility's model over proximity.

Furthermore, the nature of the service means that the likelihood of clients using public transport is extremely low. Most bus companies either prohibit dogs entirely or impose strict limitations, making vehicular access the most realistic and feasible option. In practice, the majority of clients drop off their pets en route to work, meaning that the facility utilises existing daily vehicle movements rather than generating a significant number of additional trips. This approach demonstrates that the proposed development is both operationally efficient and environmentally responsible, minimising any potential transport impacts while providing a service that cannot be delivered effectively in a built-up urban environment.

The proposal therefore meets a local need while adhering to the principles of sustainable rural enterprise—providing economic and community benefits. Accordingly the proposal complies in principle with Policy LP1 of the Local Plan and Paragraph 89 of the NPPF which recognises that sites to meet local needs may have to be fund beyond existing settlements which are not well served by public transport.

Policy LP7 requires new business/employment uses outside of allocated employment sites to be located on previously developed land or within converted/reused redundant buildings.

Unlike the previous proposal, which involved extensive additions and alterations to the existing structure, the current proposal is solely for a conversion, with no extensions, alterations, or external modifications proposed. This represents a pure conversion project, focusing entirely on repurposing the existing fabric of the building for a new use.

The building in question is currently redundant and underutilised, serving only as a storage facility. Its re-use for an employment-related purpose represents an efficient and sustainable approach, making productive use of an existing structure rather than requiring new construction. This approach aligns directly with Policy LP7 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan, which supports employment development on non-allocated sites where it involves the re-use of previously developed land or the conversion/re-use of redundant buildings.

By bringing this underused building back into active employment use without extending or altering it, the proposal demonstrates minimal environmental impact, maximises resource efficiency, and supports local economic development, fully complying in principle with the aims of the Local Plan.

A material consideration relevant to this application is planning appeal APP/B9506/W/21/3278440, which related to the use of a land and building for a dog daycare facility. In that appeal, the Inspector noted that the site was located outside any defined village and within a countryside setting. The Inspector considered that a rural location was inherently more suitable for such a use than a village or industrial estate, due to the operational requirements of dog daycare, including outdoor socialisation and exercise.

The Inspector also recognised that the proposed use would provide an important service to the local community, supporting pet care needs and thereby contributing to the sustainability and vitality of the surrounding area. Furthermore, the decision highlighted that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) supports sustainable growth and business development in rural areas, particularly where the enterprise contributes to local employment and community wellbeing. On this basis, the appeal was allowed.

There are clear and direct parallels between APP/B9506/W/21/3278440 and the current proposal. Both proposals involve a low-intensity, welfare-focused dog care operation in a rural location, with similar operational and locational characteristics. The earlier appeal demonstrates that there is scope within planning policy to support dog daycare facilities in countryside locations, provided they are appropriately designed and operated.

It is therefore submitted that the decision in APP/B9506/W/21/3278440 is a significant material planning consideration and should be given substantial weight in the assessment and determination of the current proposal. The appeal supports the principle that dog daycare facilities can be compatible with rural locations and can provide tangible community, economic, and sustainable development benefits in line with national and local planning policy.

2.6 FLOOD RISK

Section 14 of the NPPF requires a Sequential approach, directing new development to areas at lowest risk of flooding before areas at higher risk are considered. The application site is located on land within Flood Zone 3 and is therefore at highest risk of flooding.

However, most of South Holland District is located on land at high risk of flooding and it is accepted by the Council that to preclude development purely on flood risk grounds would be extremely restrictive and would effectively prohibit most development within the District. Accordingly a more pragmatic approach has been adopted which allows for some development to take place within Flood Zone 3.

Notwithstanding the above, this proposal is for a bespoke project where the rural location and use of a redundant building forms part of the development and design philosophy. Accordingly there are no alternative sites available which could accommodate the proposal and are at lower risk of flooding. The application is accompanied by a site specific Flood Risk Assessment which demonstrates that the development is technically safe from flooding without increasing the risk elsewhere.

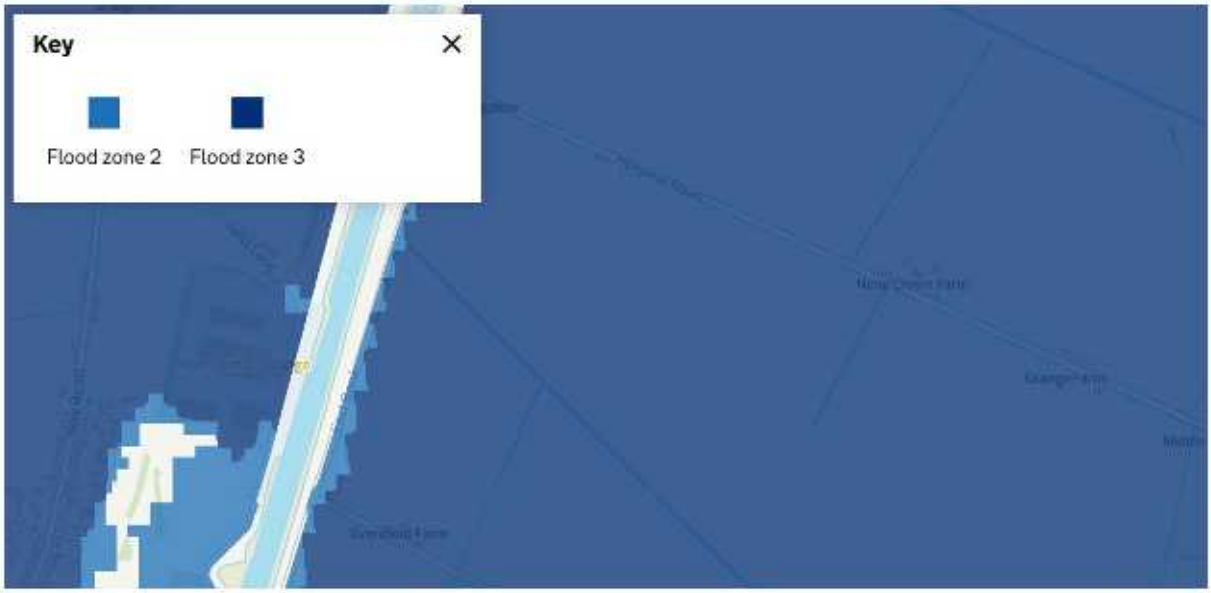

Figure 3: Extract from Environment Agency Flood Maps for Planning

3.0 DESIGN

3.1 USE, SCALE AND APPEARANCE

Policies 2, 3, and 30 of the Local Plan collectively require that development proposals demonstrate sustainable design that respects the size, scale, layout, density, and character of the area, while protecting residential amenity, trees, and the local environment. Development will only be permitted if it does not cause unacceptable adverse impacts on the surrounding area.

The previous application, H18-0979-24, was refused as the LPA considered that '*As a result of this, by virtue of its design, scale and nature, the extension would appear out of character and incongruous. Likewise, the resultant use would adversely impact the character of the area, introducing a somewhat commercial business that would create further harm to the impact of the character.*'

The reason for refusal has been carefully considered, and the scheme has been revised accordingly. The current proposal now comprises a pure conversion, with no additions or significant alterations to the existing building. A small fenced area is proposed to the rear of the site to provide a safe socialisation space for the dogs; however, this fencing will not be visible from the front of the site, ensuring the site's existing appearance is retained.

As a result, the visual characteristics of the site will remain unchanged, and the development will have no adverse visual impact on the surrounding area. The rural character and setting of the site will therefore be preserved.

The Business Operation Plan provides detailed information about the enterprise, demonstrating that the business does not generate significant traffic or activity throughout the day. The operation is low-key in nature, with only one full-time employee, who resides adjacent to the site, further minimising any external activity. Consequently, the development will not have the character of a commercial enterprise and will integrate seamlessly into its rural surroundings.

Given the minimal physical alterations, the low-intensity operational nature of the business, and the preservation of the site's visual character, the proposal will not harm the character or amenity of the area. Accordingly, the development is fully consistent with Policies 2, 3, and 30 of the Plan.



Figure 4: Proposed elevations

3.2 LAYOUT

There are no proposed changes to the layout of the site. The existing access within the eastern corner will be used, this will lead to a grassed parking and turning area. A small socialisation area for the dogs will be located to the rear of the building and will be secured with fencing.

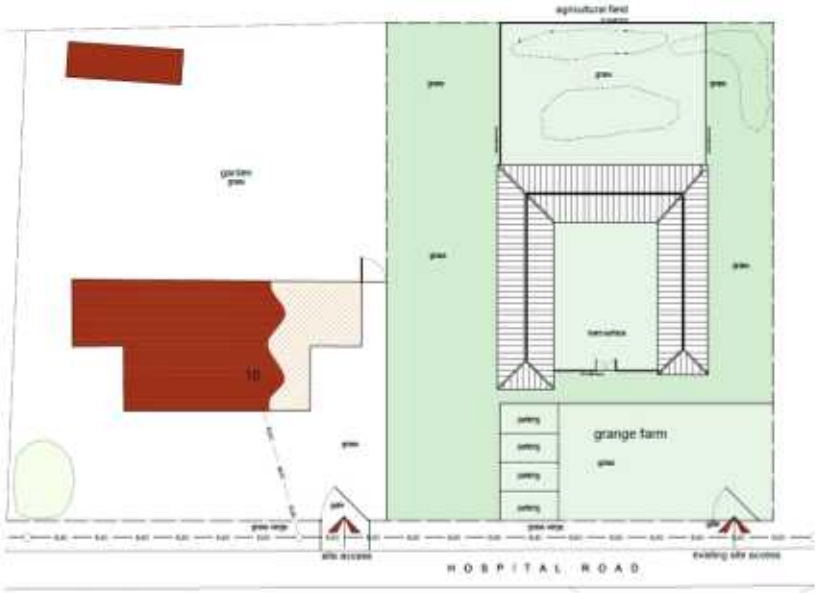

Figure 5: Site Plan

3.3 RESIDENTIAL AMENITIES

The proposal is located within a countryside setting, though there are some sporadic dwellings in the surrounding area. The previous application, H18-0979-24, raised concerns regarding the potential impact on neighbouring residential amenities due to increased activity on site, the number of dogs (which could give rise to noise disturbance), and the associated vehicular movements. As a result, the LPA considered the scheme to be contrary to Sections 12 and 15 of the NPPF and Policies 2, 3, and 30 of the Local Plan, all of which seek to safeguard the amenity of existing residents.

In response to the previous reason for refusal, the current application is supported by a comprehensive noise assessment undertaken by a specialist acoustic consultant. The findings demonstrate that the proposed activities will not generate noise at levels that would adversely affect neighbouring residential properties. Key elements of the report include the maximum number of dogs on site (17) and the location of the outdoor socialisation area to the rear of the building, which minimises any potential noise impact on nearby dwellings.

The assessment concludes that the operational nature of the facility, combined with its low-intensity activity levels and careful site layout, ensures that neighbouring residential amenities will be fully protected. Therefore, the proposal will not result in harm to the amenity of adjacent properties and is fully compliant with Policies 2, 3, and 30 of the Local Plan and Sections 12 and 15 of the NPPF.

4.0 ACCESS

4.1 SITE ACCESS

Policy 2 of the Local Plan requires safe access for new development and this is reiterated within Section 09 of the NPPF.

Access to the site is achieved via the existing vehicular entrance located at the southern corner of the site, which will be retained in its current form. This access provides a direct and safe route into the property without the need for any new roadworks, widening, or alterations, ensuring minimal disruption to the existing landscape and maintaining the rural character of the site.

Upon entering the site, vehicles are able to reach the designated parking and turning area situated to the front of the building. This arrangement allows for convenient and safe manoeuvring of vehicles, ensuring that cars can enter and exit the site without reversing onto the public highway, which enhances highway safety and operational efficiency.

Importantly, the parking and turning area will be maintained in its current grassed form, consistent with the existing arrangement. This approach ensures that the development does not introduce hard surfacing or impervious areas that could alter the visual character of the site or increase surface water runoff. By retaining the grassed surface, the proposal continues to blend seamlessly into the surrounding countryside, preserving the aesthetic and environmental qualities of the site.

Overall, the access, parking, and turning arrangements are designed to be low-impact, safe, and sympathetic to the rural setting, supporting the operational requirements of the proposed facility without generating adverse effects on the surrounding landscape or local highway network. Accordingly the proposal complies with Policy 2 of the Local Plan and Section 09 of the NPPF.

5.0 BUSINESS OPERATION PLAN

The proposal is for a small, licensed dog care facility operating in close proximity to the Sutton Bridge and Terrington areas. Uniquely positioned within the local pet care market, the business is founded on the philosophy that structured canine socialisation is essential to a dog's emotional and behavioural well-being — a feature that remains rare among traditional dog daycare services.

The business offers weekday day care services for a limited number of dogs, with strong ties to local veterinary practices and an already established client base.

Business Philosophy

Unlike conventional dog daycares that often operate as containment-focused facilities, the proposal actively encourages safe and guided social interaction between dogs. This approach is supported by structured daily routines, outdoor group walks, and supervised play, creating a balanced and engaging environment for the dogs in attendance.

Dogs are only crated or kenneled at the specific request of their owners; otherwise, the philosophy of group socialisation is upheld throughout the day. This approach is widely appreciated by clients and has created consistent demand, resulting in a waiting list for new applicants.

Current Operations

- **Days of Operation:** Monday to Friday
- **Hours of Operation:** 7:00 AM – 7:00 PM
- **Peak Operating Hours:** Drop-off between 7:00 AM – 10:00 AM; pick-up between 4:00 PM – 6:30 PM
- **Appointments:** All visits are by appointment only; no clients remain on-site beyond drop-off and collection
- **Staffing:**
    - 1 Full-time staff member (business owner, residing on-site)
    - 1 Part-time staff member (Monday to Friday, 1–2 hours daily, assisting with dog walking)
- **Parking:** One on-site parking space allocated for part-time staff use

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Facility and Licensing

- **Maximum Capacity:** 20 dogs on site at any one time (including 4 dogs owned by the applicant)
- **Current Attendance:** 12 visiting dogs daily on average
- **Staffing Ratios and Building Size:** Fully compliant with current animal welfare and licensing legislation
- **Crating/Kennelling:** Optional and owner-directed; not standard practice
- **Deliveries:**
    - One monthly van delivery for food

- One bi-monthly van delivery for supplies

Daily Routine

- Dogs typically arrive by 10:00 AM each day
- Morning group walk follows all arrivals
- Post-walk care includes optional washing or grooming services as needed
- Midday rest or play in the main communal area under supervision
- Afternoon group walk followed by grooming/wash if required
- Clients collect dogs during late afternoon to early evening hours

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Market Position & Demand

There is strong, ongoing demand for the services offered by the existing business. The facility's emphasis on healthy socialisation, coupled with its personal, small-scale operation, has proven extremely attractive to pet owners in the surrounding area. Currently, the applicant is turning away new customers due to capacity constraints, despite operating at only 60% of licensed dog intake. A waiting list for future clients is in place, highlighting the business's strong reputation and growth potential.

Planned Developments

To meet increased demand and further support existing clients the applicant is exploring the potential to:

- **Enhance current facilities** for improved dog comfort and care (hence the submission of the planning application)
- **Introduce overnight stay services** for up to five dogs at a time, specifically to assist clients during holidays or travel. This would be an extension of the existing care model, maintaining the same high standard of supervision and socialisation.

Conclusion

The enterprise is a sustainable, in-demand business with a clear niche in the pet care market. Its focus on safe, guided dog socialisation distinguishes it from competitors and fosters strong community trust.