

Proposed Change of Use of Land from Agricultural to Equestrian and the Construction of an Outdoor Private Riding Arena

Rough Lea Farm
Norden
Rochdale
OL12 7TY

Planning Statement

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1. Site Description

- 1.1 Rough Lea Farm is sited approximately 1.1 miles to the north west of the Wolstenholme, within the Green Belt.
- 1.2 The applicant, Emma Metcalfe, lives at Rough Lea Farm where she farms 10.85 hectares (26.8 acres) of land, which is reclaimed moorland.
- 1.3 Within the complex of farm buildings there is an existing stable block and the development site is to the west of the stables.

2. Planning History

- 2.1 01/D39500: Change of Use from Barn to Dwelling. Withdrawn 25/03/03
- 2.2 95/D31610: Determination on proposal to erect two agricultural buildings. Prior Approval Not Required 16/02/95.
- 2.3 93/D29042: Use of Land for storage of 12 caravans (retrospective application). Approved.

3. Development Proposal

- 3.1 The application site is to the west of the existing farm buildings.
- 3.2 It is proposed to change the use of the land from agricultural to equestrian and create an outdoor riding arena measuring 66.4m x 27.5m at its narrowest point and 30.7m at its widest point. It will have a floor area of 1955 square metres and is enclosed by a timber post and rail fence on its eastern, southern and western boundaries that is 1 metre in height from the proposed surface (283m AOD) of the riding arena. The existing dry stone field boundary wall to the north of the site will be retained.
- 3.3 The riding arena is for the private use of the applicant and her family.
- 3.4 The top soil will be excavated, a clean stone sub base laid and a perimeter kick board from timber sleepers laid around the edge protruding 150mm above the surface. The arena will be finished with fibre sand to create a safe surface for the horses at 283m AOD. Around the riding arena, there will be an area 1m wide filled with stone/gravel, it will be enclosed by the existing dry stone wall on the northern boundary and by the 1m timber post and rail fence on the eastern, southern and western boundaries.

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- 3.5 There will be no change to the existing vehicular access off Edenfield Road onto the existing track/private road that leads to Rough Lea Farm. There is a gate access from the stable building immediately to the east of the site where the family already have access into the field for horses, this gate will remain and will continue to be used to access the riding arena.

4. Relevant Planning Policies

Local Policy

The Development Plan comprises the Rochdale Core Strategy, adopted in October 2016 that is the lead document of the Rochdale Borough Local Plan; and the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan 1996 to 2016 adopted in June 2005, that is still in place until the Council's Allocations Development Plan is adopted.

Rochdale Core Strategy (2016)

Policy	Policy Aims
G4 – Protecting Green Belt	Protect the Green Belt from development except where it is not deemed to be inappropriate by national planning policies unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.
G7 – Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity	No development should result in a net loss of biodiversity or geodiversity interest in the borough and overall development in the borough should result in a net gain.
P2 – Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage	Protect the borough's character, the distinctiveness of its countryside and the qualities of its landscape.
P3 – Improving design of new development	Requires all developments to achieve high standards of design.
DM1 – General development requirements	Development should be of high quality design taking the opportunity to enhance the quality of the area, be compatible with surrounding land uses whilst not adversely affecting the amenity of residents or users and mitigate against any impacts.

Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (2006)

Policy	Policy Aims
Policy G/D/2 (Part One Policy) Green Belt	To protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development.

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), July 2021, advises at Paragraph 150:-

Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. One of these is (e) material changes of use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds);

5. Assessment of the Case

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that all planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Principle of Development – Green Belt

- 5.2 Rough Lea Farm is within the Green Belt, the proposal does not result in inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- 5.3 The NPPF, July 2021, sets out the Government's planning policies for England. Adopted Core Strategy Policy G4 protects the Pennine rural fringe to the north and east of the borough where its primary role will be to prevent encroachment into the countryside (i.e. land north of Rochdale and Heywood, east of Rochdale). Development will be restricted to those limited types of development which are deemed not to be inappropriate by national planning policies unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. Development will be supported where this maintains beneficial uses and does not harm the Green Belt.
- 5.4 Paragraph 147 of the NPPF sets out that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
- 5.5 Paragraph 150 of the NPPF confirms that certain forms of development are not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided that they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purpose of including land within it. Relevant to this application is exception e) of paragraph 150, materials changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds).
- 5.6 The proposal is to change the use of the land from agricultural to equestrian and to create an outdoor riding arena for the applicant and her family to use for their recreation. This meets the exception in paragraph 150 e) as the land will be used for outdoor sport and recreation.
- 5.7 Rochdale Core Strategy adopted policy G4 is supportive of sustainable development where it is in accordance with NPPF policies. Policy G/D/2 of the Rochdale UDP aims to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development.
- 5.8 The development site is not visually prominent from public viewpoints. It is set at a lower ground level (283M AOD) than the A680 Edenfield Road that runs parallel to the site (294M AOD) to its north and is screened by the existing dry stone boundary field wall that will be retained.

Effect on openness

- 5.9 Paragraph 137 of the NPPF identifies openness as one of the essential characteristics of Green Belts. Openness can include both visual and spatial elements. In visual terms, the impact of the riding arena is limited. In terms of its spatial impact, the riding arena will harmonise with the scale, height, form and design of the surrounding buildings and will not be obtrusive in its location.
- 5.10 In summary the development is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt and neither would it interfere with the openness of the land.

Landscape Character/Setting

- 5.11 The riding arena is sheltered from public views and would have a very limited visual impact on the character and appearance of the area. It is not considered that the development would harm the countryside and it is of a high quality design and will use materials that will maintain the character and appearance of the area. The development meets the requirements of Core Strategy Policies P2, P3 and DM1.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 5.12 The application site lies outside any international, national or local designated sites of importance for biodiversity. A Habitats Regulations Assessment is not required because the proposal does not affect either a Special Area of Conservation or Special Protection Area. The application site is not within a Ramsar Site. Land farmed and owned by the applicant is not within a nationally designated site.
- 5.13 The proposal will not harm the biodiversity or geodiversity of the site or surrounding area. The applicant is willing to provide landscaping if required and would accept a condition requiring this.

Highway Safety

- 5.14 The riding arena will not increase the amount of traffic using the existing vehicular access off Edenfield Road and it will remove the need for the applicant and her family to transport their horses to public riding arenas and will therefore result in a reduction in vehicular movements between the site and Edenfield Road.

Other Issues

- 5.15 The development will have no impact upon and will not harm the nearest bridleway, which runs parallel to the site to the north; or the nearest public right of way which is

approximately 215 metres to the east. The site is in flood zone 1, an area with a low probability of flooding and there are no neighbouring occupiers whose living conditions would be harmed by the arena. The development is not in the vicinity of any heritage assets.

6. Conclusion

It is requested that the Council support the application. In summary:-

- The proposal is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt and will not harm the openness of it, the scale of the proposal is spatially and visually inobtrusive.
- The proposal would comply with the aims and objectives of Local Policies G4, G7, P2, P3 and DM1, and with the National Planning Policy Framework.