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Green Belt Assessment

Garside Farm, Bentgate Street, Milnrow, Rochdale, OL16 4NU

Planning Application Reference: PL/2026/0281

1. Introduction

This Green Belt Assessment has been prepared by Cadence Architecture Ltd in support of the planning application at Garside Farm, Bentgate Street, Milnrow, for the change of use of existing agricultural buildings to a small-scale dog day care facility (Sui Generis).

The application site lies within the Green Belt, as defined by the adopted development plan. This statement considers the proposal against national Green Belt policy, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and against the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

2. Policy Context

National policy attaches great importance to Green Belts, the fundamental aim of which is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

The NPPF sets out that certain forms of development are not inappropriate in the Green Belt, including, amongst others, the re-use of buildings, provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

3. The Proposal

The application proposes the change of use of an existing agricultural barn, wooden shed, and site cabin, to a small-scale dog day care facility. The buildings were converted from agricultural use to their current layout approximately five years ago, and no new alterations are proposed to any building as part of this application.

The only proposed physical change anywhere on site is a new section of yard fencing, approximately 2.2 metres high, linking the existing outdoor dog play area to the existing outdoor exercise field. This fence will be erected entirely within the existing fenced and gated yard area, using materials and a height matching the boundary fencing already in place.



Figure 1: The application building, set within its existing fenced yard and the surrounding Green Belt landscape.

4. Impact on Openness

Openness is the essential characteristic of the Green Belt to be protected. The assessment of openness is both spatial and visual, having regard to the volume of built form, the extent of the area affected, and the visual impact on the surrounding landscape.

This proposal involves no new buildings, no extensions, and no increase in built footprint, height, or massing of any kind. The change of use relates entirely to the internal and operational use of buildings that already exist, and that have not functioned as agricultural buildings for a number of years. The only proposed addition, a single section of yard fencing within an already fenced and gated compound, is modest in scale, visually unobtrusive, and entirely consistent with the existing pattern of fencing on the site.

On this basis, the proposal preserves the openness of the Green Belt. There is no material change to the volume of built development on the site, and no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the site's established condition.

5. The Purposes of the Green Belt

National policy sets out five purposes of Green Belt land. This proposal is assessed against each in turn:

- **To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas:** the proposal involves no new building and does not extend the developed area of the site.
- **To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another:** the proposal has no bearing on the separation between settlements, given its modest, contained scale.
- **To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment:** no new land is brought into built use; the works are confined to the existing fenced yard.
- **To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns:** not applicable to this site, which has no heritage designation or relevant setting.
- **To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land:** not directly applicable, though the proposal does represent the continued, productive re-use of an existing rural building rather than new development on previously undeveloped land.

The proposal does not conflict with any of the five purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

6. Conclusion

This Green Belt Assessment concludes that the proposed change of use, together with the minor associated fencing works, preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with any of the purposes of including land within it. The proposal does not constitute inappropriate development, and no very special circumstances are required to justify it. The application is considered to comply with national Green Belt policy.