Proposal for Planning Permission: Change of Use from Agricultural Barn to Dog Daycare Facility

Location: Rural Property, Wrexham, North Wales

Introduction

This proposal seeks planning permission for the change of use of an existing agricultural barn at Middle Sontley Farm into a professionally managed dog daycare facility with an integrated grooming service. The facility will accommodate up to 30 dogs per day and will be operated by highly trained and qualified staff, ensuring the highest standards of care, safety, and minimal impact on the local environment and residents.

This service will be aimed at those who want their dogs to be professionally cared for while they are at work. The dogs will be cared for within the building, however there will be an outdoor area to exercise them too. The business will operate between 08:00-17:30, Monday to Friday.

The property is located in a rural area with a long history as a working farm. There are a couple of residential properties scattered around the area, however they are some distance from the barn and also all surrounding land is used for agricultural purposes. One of the traditional buildings at the front of the farm have been previously converted into cottages; these are screened from the application and are not affected. A neighbouring farm has accommodated a large engineering enterprise for several years now and this has not created any problems.

The primary access to the application barn, runs through an adjoining field, away from residential homes, minimising the potential for traffic disruption to local residents. The entrance point to this access has reasonable visibility from directions both left and right when joining the country road, and its use will not impact highway safety. Additionally, a dedicated private car park will be available for client use, which is situated far from any residential properties, ensuring that all customer traffic remains contained within the facility grounds and does not interfere with local homes. Vehicles will be able to park, maneuver and leave in a forward gear.

The application barn is constructed of steel sheets and wooden sleepers, this will not be altered in any way. Its appearance will also not be changed. The only work internally, will be the space being subdivided using studded timber to create a reception/waiting room, groomers, individual kennels for the dogs midday rest and play areas for the dogs to exercise. The floor is concrete and this will not be altered.

All waste will be stored in a bin and disposed of by a commercial waste management company. Toilets will not be provided as all staff will use the toilet situated within the farm house which drains to an existing septic tank which is working properly.

With a decline in traditional farming activities, this proposal offers a sustainable opportunity to repurpose an existing structure, providing a valuable community service while preserving

the rural character of the area. The facility will include a full range of staff facilities, ensuring a safe, professional, and well-managed environment.

Planning Policy

The proposal satisfy the guidance in the Planning Policy Wales and the relevant policies in the Wrexham Local Development Plan.

Site and Location Details

The property is located in a quiet rural setting, where agricultural activities have historically been carried out. Although some farming work continues, livestock numbers have been significantly reduced in recent years as agricultural income has become less reliable. The barn identified for conversion is structurally sound, spacious, and has previously been used for the breeding of pigs, cattle and sheep, this has been discounted/significantly reduced, this continuing could be a bigger nuisance to neighbours.

Key Site Features

- Dedicated Existing Private Entrance
- The entrance driveway runs through an adjacent instead of passing residential homes, ensuring minimal disturbance to local residents.
- The access route is well-maintained and suitable for light traffic flow.
- Existing Purpose-Built Private Car Park for Clients
- The car park is located far from any residential properties, preventing any risk of traffic congestion or noise disturbance to local homeowners.
- It will be specifically retained for client use, ensuring efficient and contained vehicle movement.
- The design of the car park allows for smooth drop-off and pick-up flow, preventing any delays or unnecessary waiting times.
- Secure Outdoor Areas for Supervised Play and Exercise
- The facility includes fully enclosed play areas, ensuring that all dogs remain securely contained.
- Dogs will be fully supervised at all times, eliminating any risk of wandering into residential areas.

Professional Expertise and Staff Qualifications

This facility will be operated by highly trained, professionally qualified dog handlers, ensuring that all animals receive expert care in a structured and controlled environment.

Business Owner and Lead Handler

- Fully qualified NCTAS-P Explosive Dog Handler (a qualification that is government-recognized and can be found on the official government website).
- Fully qualified Narcotic Detection Dog Handler with 8 years of professional experience.
- Lifelong experience handling and training dogs, including a wide range of breeds, temperaments, and working dogs.

The business The Wild Dog, has also won the award at The Welsh Business Awards for highly commended, out of all pet services in Wales.

Additional Staff

- Another fully qualified NCTAS-P Explosives Dog Handler, Narcotic Detection Dog Handler, and General-Purpose Dog Handler.
- Additional experienced staff members with many years of expertise in handling, training, and managing dogs, including large working breeds, small companion breeds, and mixed breeds.
- All staff are fully trained in canine first aid, ensuring they can respond effectively to any medical emergencies.

This high level of expertise ensures that all dogs are properly supervised, engaged in structured activities, and managed within a safe, controlled environment. The presence of professionally trained handlers with government-recognised qualifications sets this facility apart, ensuring a level of care beyond that of standard dog daycare facilities.

Proposed Operations and Management

Dog Daycare Services

- Operating Days: Monday to Friday
- Maximum Capacity: 30 dogs per day
- Drop-Off Hours: 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM
- Pick-Up Hours: 4:30 PM – 5:30 PM
- Structured activities and socialisation for all dogs, under professional supervision.

Grooming Services

- Separate grooming area within the barn.
- Available for daycare attendees and external clients (appointment-based only).
- Low-noise equipment and eco-friendly products to minimise environmental impact.

Key Benefits of the Development

1. Professionally Managed Facility with No Risk to Residents

- The entire facility is securely fenced, ensuring that dogs remain within designated areas at all times.
- The presence of highly trained handlers ensures that dogs are properly supervised and managed.

2. Minimal Traffic Impact Due to Thoughtful Site Design

- An existing car park far from residential areas eliminates any traffic disruption to local homes.
- Drop-off and pick-up times are restricted to two short windows per day, preventing unnecessary congestion.

3. Reduced Noise Compared to Previous Agricultural Use

- Historically, the site has been a working farm with livestock and machinery noise.
- The reduction in livestock and structured supervision of dogs will lower overall noise levels.
- Noise mitigation strategies, such as acoustic barriers and scheduled outdoor playtimes, will be in place.

4. Community and Economic Benefits

- Job creation for local dog handlers, groomers, and support staff.
- Support for responsible dog ownership by offering structured care.
- Convenience for local pet owners, reducing the need for long-distance daycare services.

5. Preservation of the Rural Character

- No structural alterations to the existing barn, ensuring aesthetic continuity, Only subdivided studded timber walls added internally.

- The surrounding fields will continue to be used for agricultural purposes and dog exercise.

Emergency Procedures and Risk Management

A full risk assessment has been completed to ensure the safety and well-being of all dogs, staff, and visitors. Strict emergency protocols will be in place to handle any unexpected situations, including:

- Fire Safety Measures

- A fire escape plan has been developed and clearly displayed.

- A fire assembly point has been allocated to ensure all staff and animals can be safely evacuated in the event of an emergency.

- Regular fire drills will be conducted to keep staff prepared for emergencies.

- Emergency Evacuation Plans for Dogs

- The facility has designated emergency homes and vehicles available to transport dogs in case of a serious incident, such as a fire, flood, or structural emergency.

- Each dog's emergency contact details will be kept on file for immediate communication with owners.

- First Aid and Veterinary Access

- All staff are trained in canine first aid.

- A dedicated first aid station will be available on-site.

- Local veterinarians will be on call for immediate medical assistance if needed.

Conclusion

This proposal presents a safe, professional, and well-managed plan for the conversion of an agricultural barn into a dog daycare and grooming facility.

We respectfully request planning approval, confident that this facility will be a valuable addition to the local community, providing top-tier care for dogs while maintaining the rural integrity of the area.