



RTPI

mediation of space · making of place

Supporting Statement



Bleakholt

ANIMAL SANCTUARY

Caring for those who have no one

**Bleakholt Animal Sanctuary
Bury Old Road
Edenfield
BL0 0RX**

June 2026

Kirkwells

The Planning People

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement is prepared by Kirkwells on behalf of Bleakholt Animal Sanctuary in relation to the submission of an application for planning permission for the erection of two cattery buildings, one for intake and one for isolation at Bleakholt Animal Sanctuary, Bury Old Rd, Edenfield, Ramsbottom, Bury BL0 0RX.

Figure 1: Aerial Photograph (Google)



2. The Application Site and Proposed Development

- 2.1 Bleakholt Animal Sanctuary is an established animal rescue centre for farm animals, equines and small household pets located about a mile south of Edenfield and about half a mile east of the northernmost junction of the M66. It is a fringe rural location surrounded by fields but nearby to Edenfield and Ramsbottom with good access to the M66.
- 2.2 It is accessed off Bury Old Road and Bleakholt Rd. Bury Old Rd, Edenfield forms the boundary between Bury MBC and Rossendale Borough Council areas. This proposal relates only to the land to the west of Bury Old Rd which sits entirely within Bury MBC area.
- 2.3 A previous application at the site approved in January 2018 was for the demolition of existing kennel blocks and food store building and erection of new kennels, extension and remodelling of existing café building, rebuilding of food store building and erection of donation store building; Alterations to existing car park layout, provision of 2 new footpaths and associated landscaping works.
- 2.4 The area where the kennel blocks were demolished is the location for the proposed cattery intake and isolation buildings.
- 2.5 Full planning permission is sought for the erection of two cattery buildings as detailed above.
- 2.6 The new intake cattery will enable the sanctuary to increase the number of cats helped whilst provide the best welfare possible. Each year the sanctuary helps as many as is physically possible, but this is only a small percentage of the requests for help we receive.
- 2.7 There is a huge problem in the local area with stray and unwanted cats. By expanding the housing we offer for cats, we will have a bigger impact in the local area. This will also ensure our cattery is compliant with new cattery licensing rules.
- 2.8 As detailed above the application site was previously kennels and when they were demolished, the area was kept clear to enable potential future development. The smaller Isolation block will be on ground that is currently used as a track way. This will greatly improve the visual appearance of the Sanctuary as the area is currently damp and unused other than for vehicle access.

3 Planning History

- 3.1 A search of Bury Council's and Rossendale Borough Council's planning application register shows the following planning history.
- 3.2 There have been 11 previous applications on the portion of Bleakholt which is within Bury MBC area and 1 to Rossendale Council since 2005 to present day. Two were withdrawn but the rest have all been approved subject to conditions.

App.No.44416 - Reinforced concrete sectional storage building – Approved 23.5.2005

App.No.45564 - New toilet block – Withdrawn 23.1.2006

App.No.47292 - New toilet block – Approved 20.2.2007

App.No.47458 - Extension to existing cattery building – approved 20.2.2007

App.No.57591 - Removal of 3 field shelters and replace with 4 field shelters – Approved 14.8.14

App.No.57728 - Prior notification of a hay barn – Withdrawn 10.7.2014

App.No.58887 - Variation of condition 2 re 57591 – Approved 28.7.2015

App.No.59909 - Outdoor riding arena (40m x 25m) with terraced viewing area – Approved 19.5.2016

App.No.62009 - Demolition of existing kennel blocks and food store building and erection of new kennels, extension and remodelling of existing cafe building, rebuilding of food store building and erection of donation store building; Alterations to existing car park layout, provision of 2 new footpaths and associated landscaping works – Approved 9.01.2018

App.No.2014/0351 - Erection of a field shelter – approved 9.10.2014 (this is the only application to Rossendale).

4. Planning Policy Context

- 4.1 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) published in December 2024, continues to make it clear that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Bury Planning Policy

- 4.2 The Statutory Development Plan for the application site comprises The Places for Everyone (PfE) joint development plan document (DPD) (2024) and the saved policies of the Bury Unitary Development Plan that have not been superseded by PfE
- 4.3 The site is located in the Green Belt and the following policies are the most relevant to the determination of this application.

Places for Everyone

Policy JP-G7: Trees and Woodland

Policy JP-G8: A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy JP-G9: The Green Belt

The Green Belt is defined on the Policies Map and illustrated on Figure 8.6. The Green Belt serves the five purposes set out in national policy:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*

The beneficial use of the Green Belt will be enhanced where this can be achieved without harm to its openness, permanence or ability to serve its five purposes. In particular, the enhancement of its green infrastructure functions will be encouraged, such as improved public access and habitat restoration, helping to deliver environmental and social benefits for our residents and providing the high quality green spaces that will support economic growth.

Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places

Policy JP-P2: Heritage

Bury Unitary Development Plan

Policy EN1 - BUILT ENVIRONMENT (Part)

National Planning Policy Framework (2024) (NPPF)

4.4 The NPPF sets out the governments planning policies for England and how these should be applied and is itself a material consideration in planning decisions. The most relevant sections are as follows:

- Section 2: Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 4: Decision-making
- Section 9: Promoting sustainable transport.
- Section 11: Making effective use of land.
- Section 12: Achieving well-designed places.
- Section 13: Protecting the Green Belt

4.5 Relevant key paragraphs of the NPPF are included below:

NPPF: 2. Achieving Sustainable Development

4.6 The following paragraphs relate to achieving sustainable development

“7. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs⁴. At a similarly high level, members of the United Nations – including the United Kingdom – have agreed to pursue the 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development in the period to 2030. These address social progress, economic well-being and environmental protection.

8. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.*
- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and*

- c) *an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.*

9. These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in this Framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.

10. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11)."

- 4.7 Paragraph 11 states: *"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.*
For decision-taking this means:

- c) *approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
- d) *where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
 - i. *the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
 - ii. *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."*

NPPF Section 9: Promoting sustainable transport

- 4.8 Paragraph 115 clarifies that in assessing specific applications for new development, it should be ensured that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be, or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location.
- 4.9 Paragraph 116 states that *"Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios."*

NPPF: 11. Making effective use of land

4.10 Paragraph 124 states: *“Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously developed or ‘brownfield’ land.”*

4.11 Paragraph 125 states:

“Planning policies and decisions should:

- a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside.*
- b) recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production.*
- c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land.*
- d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lockups and railway infrastructure); and*
- e) support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions where the development would be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well-designed (including complying with any local design policies and standards) and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers.”*

NPPF: 12. Achieving well-designed places

4.12 Paragraph 131 states: *“The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about*

design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.”

NPPF: 13. Protecting Green Belt Land

4.13 Paragraph 142 states: *“The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.”*

4.14 “Paragraph 143: *Green Belt serves five purposes:*

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.”*

4.15 Paragraph 153 states: *“When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness⁵⁵. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.”*

4.16 Paragraph 154 includes developments that are exceptions and states as follows:

154. Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the following exceptions applies:

b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

5. Planning Justification

Principle of Development

- 5.1 The site lies within the Green Belt within the complex of buildings operated and managed by Bleakholt Animal Sanctuary.
- 5.2 In terms of Green Belt Policy, as detailed in the previous section, paragraph 154 includes two exceptions which the development falls within.
- 5.3 The buildings are to be positioned, where kennels were demolished under a previous application, with the whole site being operated as an animal sanctuary.
- 5.4 Due to the positioning of the existing trees at the site which will be retained, the buildings will be contained within the existing built form and will not impact on the openness of the Green Belt, nor will it encroach further into the Green Belt.
- 5.5 The development is considered to be not inappropriate in the Green Belt and acceptable in terms of the NPPF and Policy JP-GP of Places for Everyone Joint Plan

Visual Amenity

- 5.6 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF states:

Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) 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.*

- 5.7 Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places of Places for Everyone also seeks to ensure development are designed well, safe, adaptable and resource efficient.
- 5.8 The proposed buildings will be laid on a concrete base, and are made from Upvc with glazing.
- 5.9 The buildings are purpose built for their use as a cattery, and will ensure that the cats will have much improved facilities.
- 5.10 In terms of visual amenity, the proposed development is acceptable in its context and is in accordance with the NPPF, Policy JP-P1 of Places for Everyone Joint Plan and Policy EN1 of the Bury Unitary Development Plan

Access, Parking and Highway Safety

- 5.11 Vehicular access to the sanctuary will be as existing, and will not be affected in any way by the proposed development.
- 5.12 The proposed development is in accordance with the NPPF, Policy JP-P1 of Places for Everyone Joint Plan and Policy EN1 of the Bury Unitary Development Plan

Trees

- 5.13 The application site closest to the trees already has an artificial unvegetated unsealed surface as detailed in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- 5.14 The proposed development will not impact on the trees at the site.

Drainage

- 5.15 The proposed buildings will be connected to the existing surface water and foul drainage systems on the site.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The site is a suitable and appropriate location for the development which is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- 6.2 The proposed development is also acceptable in terms of visual amenity, access, parking and highways safety, and impact on trees
- 6.3 In accordance with Paragraph 11, the development accords with the Development Plan and should be approved without delay.

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