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DESIGN, ACCESS & PLANNING STATEMENT

Retrospective construction of holding pen and additional hardstanding, Land adjacent to Hartcliff Hill Road, Penistone, Sheffield, S36 9FS

Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Emma Metcalf in support of a retrospective planning application for the retention of a holding/turnout pen and areas of additional hardstanding on land adjacent to Hartcliff Hill Road, Penistone.

The application seeks to regularise operational development that has already been undertaken. It should be read alongside the submitted drawings:

- 4682 P400-Site Location Plan;
- 4682 P401-Block Plan as Original;
- 4682 P402-Block Plan as Existing; and
- 4682 P403-Site Plan as Existing with Details.

The land already accommodates an agricultural building, track and associated hardstanding arising from the earlier development approved under planning permission 2021/0557. The submitted original block plan identifies the barn and original hardstanding/track as having been constructed pursuant to that permission.

Background and reason for the development

The holding pen was constructed in response to an urgent animal-welfare requirement, rather than to provide a riding arena or commercial equestrian facility.

The supporting letter (see Appendix 1) from Simon Hutton of Hutton Equine Limited, dated 15 July 2026, explains that a horse under veterinary care had developed sepsis and subsequently laminitis. The condition required daily monitoring, careful dietary and hoof management and confinement. The hoof capsule became compromised and was ultimately shed, resulting in a requirement for the horse to be maintained in conditions free from mud for approximately 12 months.

The veterinary evidence explains that a turnout pen was therefore constructed with a surface capable of remaining free from mud during winter whilst being soft underfoot during summer. Mr Hutton states that he had only seen the facility being used for its intended purpose as a turnout pen and that, without the facility, he would have considered the situation to raise a welfare concern for the horse. The letter also confirms that horses currently kept at the site are under veterinary care for matters including lameness, weight management and injuries.

The facility was therefore created as a temporary management and rehabilitation measure necessitated by veterinary and animal-welfare circumstances. The present application seeks permission to retain the physical works following their construction.

Description of development

The application concerns:

1. retention of the fenced holding/turnout pen;
2. retention of associated ground works and surfacing; and
3. retention of the identified additional areas of hardstanding.

The pen was constructed from recycled demolition material laid over a geotextile membrane and finished with bark/woodchip, with timber fencing around its perimeter. Filter drainage trenches leading away from the pen into the adjoining field where water can soak away have been installed.

The development is concentrated immediately around the existing agricultural building and established track rather than introducing a separate developed enclave elsewhere within the holding. Comparison of the original and existing block plans demonstrates the relationship between the previously approved farm infrastructure and the relatively localised additional works now requiring retrospective consent.

Planning policy context

National Planning Policy Framework

The current National Planning Policy Framework was published in August 2026 and updated on 29 September 2026. It is a material consideration in planning decisions and establishes national policies for the determination of development proposals.

Chapter 13 concerns Green Belt development. The fundamental objective remains the prevention of urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, with openness and permanence identified as the essential characteristics of Green Belt land.

The proposal should therefore be considered principally in terms of:

- whether its use and physical form are appropriate in this rural location;
- its effect upon Green Belt openness;
- its effect upon the character and appearance of the countryside; and
- the particular circumstances and demonstrated animal-welfare justification for the works.

Barnsley Local Plan

The statutory development plan is the Barnsley Local Plan, adopted on 3 January 2019. Barnsley Council confirms that its adopted Local Plan and Policies Map provide the basis for managing development within the Borough and that supplementary planning documents are used alongside the Local Plan in deciding applications.

Of particular relevance is Local Plan Policy GB1, which protects the Green Belt from inappropriate development in accordance with national planning policy. Barnsley Council has recently applied Policy GB1 alongside national Green Belt policy when considering agricultural development elsewhere in the Borough.

Planning assessment

Principle and Green Belt

The development is small-scale, low-level and directly associated with the management of animals already kept on the wider rural holding.

Unlike a conventional building, the holding pen introduces no enclosed built volume or substantial massing. Its principal above-ground component consists of open timber fencing. The permeable character of the enclosure allows views across and through the facility and consequently limits its visual and spatial effect upon the wider landscape.

The development is also closely grouped with the existing agricultural building, access track and hardstanding rather than being positioned remotely within an otherwise undeveloped field. The earlier drawings confirm that an agricultural barn and access track had already formed part of the approved development of this part of the holding.

The scale, form and location of the works mean that the openness of the wider Green Belt is substantially retained. There is no urbanising building, residential accommodation or substantial new built form arising from the proposal.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered consistent with the objectives underpinning Local Plan Policy GB1 and the NPPF objective of maintaining the openness and permanence of the Green Belt. Even where some limited Green Belt harm may be attributed to the engineering operations/hardstanding, that harm should be balanced against the unusually strong and independently evidenced animal-welfare circumstances which necessitated the works.

Animal welfare

Significant weight should be given to the veterinary justification for the holding pen.

The works were undertaken because a horse suffering serious complications following sepsis and laminitis required controlled turnout on a soft, mud-free surface, together with close monitoring and management. The supporting veterinary evidence is particularly clear that the facility was required as part of care for the animal and that the absence of such provision would have represented an animal-welfare concern.

The development was not undertaken to establish an arena or recreational riding facility. The applicant has expressly advised Barnsley Council that customers do not pay to use the pen and that there are no customers visiting the site for this purpose.

These circumstances form an important material consideration in favour of retaining the works.

Landscape and visual impact

The holding lies within an established rural landscape and the development needs to be considered in that context.

The pen is modest in scale and uses simple agricultural-style timber fencing. The surfacing is relatively recessive in appearance and sits at ground level. The combination of its low profile and its relationship with the existing barn and track considerably reduces its visual prominence when compared with a freestanding building.

There is consequently no substantial erosion of the open countryside character of the surrounding landscape.

Additional hardstanding

The additional hardstanding extends the usable surface around the established agricultural building and access arrangements rather than creating a separate development elsewhere on the holding. The submitted plans clearly distinguish the additional areas requiring retrospective permission from the track and hardstanding associated with the earlier approval.

The works therefore consolidate activity around the existing developed part of the site. Their ground-level nature means that they introduce no material mass or enclosure and their effect upon Green Belt openness is correspondingly limited.

Drainage

The holding pen incorporates filter drainage trenches leading towards the adjoining field, as shown on drawing P403.

This demonstrates that drainage formed part of the construction of the pen rather than surface water simply being uncontrolled.

Retrospective nature of the application

The retrospective nature of the application does not alter the planning merits upon which the development should be assessed.

The works arose from an immediate need to provide appropriate conditions for a seriously unwell horse rather than through an intention to circumvent normal planning controls. Once the planning position was raised, the applicant has sought to regularise the development through the submission of the present application.

The submitted drawings now clearly distinguish between the original approved development and the additional operational development for which retrospective permission is sought.

Conclusion

The application seeks retrospective permission for a modest holding/turnout pen and limited areas of additional hardstanding associated with an existing rural holding at Hartcliff Hill Road.

The holding pen arose from a specific and independently verified veterinary need, and that failure to provide suitable conditions would have raised an animal-welfare concern.

The resultant development is:

- modest and low-level in physical form;
- positioned alongside the existing agricultural building and track;
- constructed using relatively simple and recessive materials;
- without substantial enclosed built volume;
- supported by veterinary evidence demonstrating its animal-welfare purpose; and
- limited in its effect upon the openness and rural character of the wider Green Belt.

The proposals are therefore considered capable of being accommodated without materially undermining the openness or purposes of the Green Belt and are consistent with the objectives of the current NPPF and Barnsley Local Plan, including Policy GB1.

Having regard to the limited physical effects of the works, their relationship to the established agricultural infrastructure and the compelling veterinary circumstances which gave rise to their construction, it is respectfully requested that Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council grant retrospective planning permission for retention of the holding pen and associated additional hardstanding.

Appendix 1 – Supporting Letter from Simon Hutton

Hutton Equine Limited
The Old Farmhouse
Briery Busk Farm
Nine Acre Lane
Sheffield
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15th July 2026

To Whom It May Concern,

I have worked with Emma and her horses for 7 years.
All of her animals receive the best care.
Last year she had a horse that developed sepsis, part of that diagnosis meant the horse then developed Laminitis.
The horse needed daily monitoring, in a confined space with extremely careful management of its diet, and hoof care. The hoof capsule was compromised and eventually shed itself off. This meant the horse would require this level of management, free from mud for 12 months.
Emma spared no expenses and built a turnout pen with a soft surface that was free from mud in the winter, but soft under foot in the summer.
I have personally only seen this used for its intended purpose, as a turnout pen.
If this had not been done, I would have considered it a welfare concern for the horse in question.
I can also confirm that Emma does rent land all over as I have had to travel to different locations previously, to scan under a turnout rug. This can be evidenced with a picture Emma once took of me.
The horses currently at the site are also under my care for various reasons, lameness, weight, injuries, etc.

Yours faithfully,

Simon Hutton BVMS MRCVS