



**PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE FOR FIELD AT LAURISTON FARM ROAD –  
PLANNING APPLICATION 20/01927/FUL**

**The Closing Date for Comments on this Application is Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

Many residents will be aware that a five year lease granted by the Council to Edinburgh Pet Care in August 2019 for the training and exercising of dogs on the field at Lauriston Farm Road was in contravention of the terms of the legislation covering building and fencing on agricultural land. An investigation by the Council's Planning Enforcement Department into the decision by the Council's own Commercial Leasing Department to award the lease, and which was due to report on 9th June, has now (unsurprisingly) been deferred until the determination of a Planning Application which has now been submitted for approval of the activities. This should have been the situation from the start and the DMSA welcomes the fact that local residents are now being given the opportunity to have their say on the proposals even if there are concerns that the process has been distorted by the earlier approval of the lease without prior discussion or notification. It is hoped that the earlier decision by Commercial Leasing to award the Lease will have no bearing on the Planning Committee reaching a fair and objective decision on this application.

**The Planning Application**

To view the application go to [www.edinburgh.gov.uk](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk). From the options select "Planning and Building", then select "Planning Applications", then select "View or Comment on Planning Applications" and input the Reference Number 20/01927/FUL

Edinburgh Pet Care have provided full details of their proposals and requirements in a Planning Permission Document which can be viewed in detail on the Council's Planning Portal. They plan to secure the field for the stated purpose of turning it into a private hire dog field, which will be available to the public to rent out in 30 minute time segments to allow their dogs to have a secure area where they can be safely let of the lead for exercise.

In order to do this planning permission is required for the following:

1. Change of use for the field from the currently designated agricultural land to a classification which would permit leasing as a private hire dog field.
2. Erection of a 1.8 m high fence, at a distance 2 m in from the existing boundary fence.
3. Construction of an open front shelter, 3 m by 2 m , and 3 m high.
4. Construction of a temporary structure for private use, 6 m by 3.2 m, and 4m high.

The proposals also include the provision of screening with a suggested Leylandii hedge between the existing outer and new inner fences.

The statement indicates that the intended operating hours are to be from 7 am to 6 pm and addresses possible noise, parking and environmental concerns for local residents. It is for residents to judge whether these have been satisfactorily explained.

## **The History of the Field**

The history of the fields on the west side of Silverknowes Road is that they were left in a bequest to Edinburgh Corporation (now City of Edinburgh Council) in 1926 as designated agricultural ground and they have been recognised as open space green belt land since that time. An attempt in 1989 to obtain approval to develop part of the site adjacent to Lauriston Farm Road as a technological/ industrial estate was refused after widespread local opposition from residents in Davidson's Mains and Silverknowes. Subsequently in 2010, following a widespread public consultation, the field was designated by the Council for future use as public allotments, when a number of potential sites across the city were being proposed to address the long standing serious shortage of availability. The designation had strong local support subject to the recognition that low rise soft screening would be required on Lauriston Farm Road. Approval for the current planning application would clearly supersede the Council decision of 2010. Many residents in the properties who overlook the field purchased their properties in the expectation that the fields would be protected from any future development.

## **The Decision for the Planning Development sub-Committee**

When it meets to consider this application the Planning Development Sub Committee will have to decide if there is sufficient reason and justification to remove the current protections against development on the fields to allow the proposed activity to train and exercise dogs, with the construction of fencing, buildings, and dense hedging. As a secondary consequential matter, if approval of the application is granted, they will also have to decide whether any operating restrictions should be imposed on the operators of the business.

Some may see this application as providing a local service to meet any demand for a service to train and exercise dogs in a secure environment, while others will view the proposed change of use as removal of the long standing protection against development on the land, with the risk that it sets a precedent for developments in the other fields at Silverknowes.

There is no half measure, compromise position on this application, and while many have already done so to meet the initial earlier advertised date (9 June), it is very important that all local residents take the opportunity to have their say.

## **How to Comment on the Application?**

Comments can be made on the City of Edinburgh Council website at [www.edinburgh.gov.uk](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk)

Select the option "Planning and Building", then select "Planning Applications", then the option for "Comment on Planning Applications" and this leads to the link to the comments page.

You may wish also to contact the Almond Ward Councillors to let them know your views. They can be contacted by email or telephone as follows:

Cllr. Graham Hutchison	email: <a href="mailto:graham.hutchison@edinburgh.gov.uk">graham.hutchison@edinburgh.gov.uk</a>	529 4354
Cllr. Kevin Lang	email: <a href="mailto:kevin.lang@edinburgh.gov.uk">kevin.lang@edinburgh.gov.uk</a>	529 4389
Cllr. Norman Work	email: <a href="mailto:_norman.work@edinburgh.gov.uk">_norman.work@edinburgh.gov.uk</a>	529 3272.
Cllr. Louise Young	email: <a href="mailto:louise.young@edinburgh.gov.uk">louise.young@edinburgh.gov.uk</a>	529 4572

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