

Planning Statement

Proposed Development: Construction of an Equestrian Ménage

Site Address: 29 Lindridge Lane, Desford, LE9 9GN

Applicant: Felicity Curley

Date: 22/02/2025

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared to support an application for the construction of a private equestrian ménage at 29 Lindridge Lane, Desford, LE9 9GN. The proposal seeks to provide a safe, year-round riding surface for private equestrian use, enhancing the usability of the site without causing harm to the environment, local character, or public access.

The development has been designed to blend seamlessly with the rural surroundings, using appropriate materials and ensuring minimal landscape and ecological impact.

2. Site Description

The site is located in a rural setting, currently used for equestrian and agricultural purposes. It comprises open paddocks, existing equestrian infrastructure, and natural boundary features such as hedgerows and trees.

- The site is not within a designated conservation area, Green Belt, or protected landscape.
- There are no listed buildings, public rights of way, or ecological designations within or immediately adjacent to the site.
- The proposed ménage will be positioned to minimise visual impact, using natural screening where necessary.

3. Proposed Development

The application seeks planning permission for a 20m x50m ménage, which will provide a safe, level riding surface for equestrian training.

Key Features:

- Surface:** A well-draining, all-weather equestrian surface.
- Fencing:** Traditional timber post-and-rail fencing, in keeping with the rural character.
- Drainage:** A permeable surface with an appropriate drainage system to prevent waterlogging and runoff.
- Access:** The ménage will be accessed on foot or horseback from the existing stable yard—no additional access routes are required.

This development is solely for private use and will not be used for commercial riding lessons, liverys, or competitions.

4. Planning Policy Compliance

The proposal aligns with national and local planning policies supporting rural and equestrian development.

4.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF (2021) encourages rural development that:

- Supports sustainable rural businesses and recreational activities (Paragraph 84).
- Protects the character of the countryside while allowing appropriate development.
- Ensures no significant harm to biodiversity or the environment.

This application is fully compliant with these principles by enhancing rural recreation while maintaining the natural character of the area.

4.2 Local Plan Policies

- The development supports equine-related rural activities.
- It preserves landscape character by using appropriate materials and screening.
- There is no adverse impact on highways, residential amenity, or biodiversity.

5. Environmental and Biodiversity Considerations

The development has been carefully designed to minimise environmental impact:

- No trees, hedgerows, or priority habitats will be removed or disturbed.
- The ménage is located in a low-ecological-value area, ensuring minimal biodiversity disruption.
- The surrounding grass margins will be left to support pollinators and local wildlife.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Consideration

Under the Environment Act 2021, BNG is required for major developments. This proposal does not meet that threshold because:

- It is not a major development (under 1 hectare and not commercially operated).
- It does not involve significant habitat loss or affect protected species.
- It is reversible, ensuring no permanent environmental damage.

Therefore, BNG should not be a requirement for this development.

6. Access and Parking

- The existing site access is sufficient—no new access routes are required.
- Vehicles and horse trailers will continue to use the existing parking area, preventing the need for additional hardstanding.
- The development will not generate additional traffic or impact local highways.

7. Landscape and Visual Impact

- The ménage will be discreetly located within an existing paddock, ensuring minimal visibility from public viewpoints.
- The post-and-rail fencing will match existing boundary treatments, ensuring visual continuity.

- If required, native hedgerow planting can be introduced for additional screening.

Overall, the ménage will blend into the natural landscape and will not detract from the rural character of the area.

8. Conclusion

The proposed equestrian ménage is a modest and well-integrated development that:

- Provides a safe, all-weather riding surface for private equestrian use.
- Supports rural recreation without harming the landscape.
- Complies with national and local planning policies for rural development.
- Does not require BNG compliance due to its minor scale and minimal ecological impact.
- Does not generate additional traffic or require new access routes.

Given these factors, we respectfully request that planning permission be granted.