JDC RESCUE

BUSINESS CASE

2027-2030 Development of the Rescue Branch

Strategic review of the existing sanctuary model and assessment of future operating options

Prepared for: JDC Rescue Board Committee

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Status: For Board Committee consideration

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Item	Details
Document	Business Case – Future Development of the JDC Rescue Branch
Prepared for	JDC Rescue Board Committee
Date	November 2026
Purpose	To assess future operating models ahead of the expiry of the current property lease.
Decision status	Strategic direction and authority to undertake detailed feasibility work.

DECISION SOUGHT

The Board Committee is asked to consider the strategic case for transitioning from the current sanctuary-centred model to a foster-led hybrid operating model, and to approve the next-stage assessment and pilot activities set out in this paper.

This paper does not seek approval for a land purchase, construction project or final property commitment. Those decisions should follow a detailed financial, operational, property and regulatory assessment.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Purpose

JDC Rescue is approaching the expiry of its current property lease. This creates a significant strategic decision about the future structure, location and delivery of the rescue branch.

The organization currently operates a sanctuary-based model on leased land. While this provides direct oversight and centralized care, the current property has steep terrain that creates health and safety risks. The model also requires daily staffing for feeding, cleaning, exercise, supervision and maintenance. Other material considerations include barking and noise exposure, the remote location, declining adoption rates and the substantial capital investment that may be required to establish a replacement sanctuary.

This business case assesses three options: continuation of the sanctuary model at a new property; transition to a foster-based model; and a hybrid model combining a smaller central facility with a managed foster network.

1.2 Recommendation

The recommended direction is to transition towards a FOSTER-LED HYBRID MODEL. Under this structure, suitable dogs would primarily be accommodated in approved foster homes, while a smaller physical rescue facility would provide temporary accommodation, emergency intake, assessment, isolation and specialized care.

The future facility should support the rescue network rather than operate as the primary long-term accommodation location. JDC Rescue should not automatically replicate its current large sanctuary model through another large rural lease or substantial land purchase.

1.3 Rationale

- The current terrain creates recurring health and safety exposure for staff, volunteers and dogs.
- A sanctuary creates ongoing fixed staffing, cleaning, exercise and property costs.
- Concentrating multiple dogs at one site increases barking and potential noise-management exposure.
- A remote location may be limiting prospective adopter access and contributing to longer stays; this should be tested against adoption data.

- A new sanctuary or land purchase would require substantial capital and introduce long-term property exposure.
- A foster network can extend geographical reach and provide opportunities to observe dogs in domestic environments.
- A smaller central facility would preserve emergency and specialist capacity while reducing reliance on permanent kennel accommodation.

The proposed change is intended to strengthen JDC Rescue's rescue capability, not reduce it. The objective is to direct resources towards animal welfare, rehabilitation and successful adoption rather than maintaining accommodation capacity for its own sake.

2. CURRENT OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

2.1 Existing sanctuary arrangement

JDC Rescue currently accommodates and manages dogs at a central leased property. Daily care, exercise, supervision and preparation for adoption are organized around that location. This gives the organization direct oversight, but also makes the operating model dependent on the suitability, availability and cost of one property.

2.2 Property and health and safety

The steep terrain creates practical and safety challenges, including the movement and handling of dogs, staff access, cleaning, waste removal, transport of supplies, emergency access and the care of dogs with mobility limitations. These risks are particularly relevant where dogs may be strong, unfamiliar with handling or behaviorally challenging.

The organization should ensure that risks are assessed and controlled in accordance with its applicable obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. The suitability of the property should be treated as a fundamental operational constraint, not merely a maintenance issue.

2.3 Staffing and daily coverage

A sanctuary requires reliable daily coverage, including weekends, public holidays, leave and sickness. Core activities include feeding, medication, cleaning, exercise, enrichment, behavioral observation, handling, veterinary coordination and property maintenance. These duties continue regardless of adoption volumes or short-term changes in rescue intake, creating a relatively inflexible cost base.

2.4 Barking and regulatory exposure

Housing multiple dogs at one location can increase collective barking and the risk of complaints. Rescue dogs may bark due to fear, frustration, territorial responses, separation-related distress or environmental adjustment. Any future facility must be assessed against applicable local authority requirements, including district-plan provisions, noise rules, dog-control bylaws and any required consents. A rural location does not automatically remove these obligations.

2.5 Adoption accessibility

The current remote location may make meet-and-greets, household introductions and follow-up visits more difficult for prospective adopters. Declining adoption rates and longer stays can increase costs and reduce the number of dogs the organization can assist. JDC Rescue should examine enquiry volumes, visitor numbers, cancellations, travel-related barriers and enquiry-to-adoption conversion before attributing the decline to location. Nevertheless, accessibility should be an explicit criterion in the future operating model.

3. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The future model should be assessed against the following objectives:

Objective	Desired outcome

Animal welfare	Appropriate accommodation, exercise, rehabilitation and individualized care.
Adoption performance	Improved accessibility and successful rehoming.
Financial sustainability	Lower unnecessary fixed costs and controlled capital expenditure.
Health and safety	Reduced exposure to avoidable operational hazards.
Operational efficiency	Effective allocation of staff and volunteer resources.
Foster governance	Consistent standards, accountability and placement oversight.
Regulatory compliance	Suitable premises and documented operating procedures.
Scalability and resilience	Capacity to respond to demand without disproportionate infrastructure investment or dependence on one property.

A core performance principle should be adopted: rescue capacity should be measured by successful welfare and adoption outcomes, not simply by the number of dogs physically accommodated at a sanctuary.

4. STRATEGIC OPTIONS

OPTION 1 – CONTINUE THE SANCTUARY MODEL

Description: Relocate to another suitable property and continue centralized dog accommodation as the primary operating structure. The property would need suitable terrain, access, exercise areas, kennel infrastructure and appropriate separation from neighbouring properties.

Strengths

- Maintains the existing operating structure and established processes.
- Provides direct oversight of dogs and daily care.
- Centralizes feeding, cleaning, medication and supervision.
- Provides immediate accommodation for incoming dogs, subject to capacity.
- Supports direct behavioral observation and assessment.

Weaknesses

- Requires another suitable property and potentially substantial lease or purchase expenditure.
- May require significant infrastructure and development costs.
- Retains daily staffing, cleaning and exercise requirements.
- Continues concentrated barking and noise exposure.
- May not resolve adoption-accessibility challenges if the new location is remote.
- Maintains a relatively high fixed-cost structure.

Opportunities

- Improve the layout, accessibility and safety of the facility.
- Establish purpose-designed kennels, isolation and exercise areas.
- Improve adoption facilities and operational procedures.

Threats

- Planning or consent barriers.
- Construction and infrastructure cost overruns.
- Neighbour complaints or noise enforcement.
- Staff shortages and increasing employment costs.
- Capital tied up in property rather than direct rescue services.
- Continued low adoption rates or longer stays.

Assessment: This option offers continuity but may reproduce the underlying weaknesses of the current model. It should only be pursued if a suitable property can be secured at an acceptable cost and a whole-of-life financial assessment demonstrates sustainability.

Position: Not preferred.

OPTION 2 – TRANSITION TO A FOSTER-BASED MODEL

Description: Replace permanent centralized accommodation with a managed network of approved foster homes. JDC Rescue would retain responsibility for intake decisions, veterinary treatment, behavioural management, welfare monitoring, foster support and adoption.

Strengths

- Reduces dependence on land, kennel infrastructure and centralized cleaning.
- Distributes daily care and exercise across foster homes.
- Extends geographical coverage and may improve adoption accessibility.
- Allows dogs to experience domestic environments.
- Creates opportunities to observe behaviour in household settings.
- Reduces concentration of barking at a single property.
- Allows capacity to grow through foster recruitment rather than construction.

Weaknesses

- Reduces direct physical supervision.
- Depends on foster availability and commitment.
- Requires significant coordination, screening and monitoring.
- Can produce inconsistent care without clear standards.
- May create placement breakdowns, transport demands and emergency accommodation gaps.

Opportunities

- Develop regional foster networks and specialist foster categories.
- Recruit homes for puppies, medical cases and behavioural rehabilitation.
- Build partnerships with veterinary practices and trainers.
- Redirect some property expenditure towards welfare, treatment and rehabilitation.

Threats

- Foster carers withdrawing unexpectedly.
- Inadequate screening or supervision.
- Unauthorised transfers or rehoming.
- Behavioural deterioration in unsuitable placements.
- Reputational damage from poor foster management.
- Insufficient foster capacity during periods of high intake.

Assessment: A foster-based model offers substantial potential but requires robust governance and sufficient validated capacity before the sanctuary can be phased out. It should not be adopted as an immediate complete replacement without a tested contingency arrangement.

Position: Viable alternative, but not preferred as an immediate standalone model.

OPTION 3 – FOSTER-LED HYBRID MODEL

Description: Establish a smaller central rescue facility supported by a structured foster network. Suitable dogs would be placed in foster homes, while the central facility would accommodate dogs requiring temporary, emergency, assessment, isolation or specialist care.

Strengths

- Retains emergency accommodation and central assessment capability.
- Reduces permanent sanctuary occupancy and associated daily workload.
- Improves geographical reach and potential adoption accessibility.
- Maintains direct control for dogs requiring specialist support.
- Allows a phased transition and operational testing.
- Reduces dependence on large-scale kennel infrastructure.

Weaknesses

- Requires management of both a facility and a foster network.
- Retains some property and staffing costs.
- Creates additional coordination and transport requirements.
- May duplicate costs if sanctuary occupancy and expenditure are not genuinely reduced.

Opportunities

- Establish a smaller, more accessible rescue hub.
- Develop regional foster capacity and specialist placements.
- Retain essential facilities without maintaining a large sanctuary.
- Scale capacity in line with validated foster availability.

Threats

- Insufficient foster recruitment.
- High fixed costs continuing despite lower facility occupancy.
- Unclear responsibilities between facility staff and foster carers.
- Foster placement failures or underutilisation of the facility.
- Insufficient funding for coordination and dual operations.

Assessment: This option provides the strongest balance between centralized control and distributed accommodation. It preserves essential physical capability while reducing the requirement for a large permanent sanctuary.

Position: Preferred option.

5. COMPARATIVE EVALUATION

Criterion	Sanctuary	Foster	Hybrid
Capital investment	High	Low	Moderate
Fixed operating costs	High	Lower	Moderate
Central staffing	High	Coordination-focused	Moderate
Direct operational control	High	Lower	High for hub dogs
Foster management requirement	Low	High	High
Emergency accommodation	Central capacity	Depends on availability	Retained
Geographical reach	Location-dependent	High	High
Adoption accessibility	Location-dependent	Potentially improved	Potentially improved
Barking concentration	High	Distributed	Reduced

Terrain exposure at current site	Continues unless relocated	Reduced central exposure	Reduced central exposure
Infrastructure dependency	High	Low	Moderate
Scalability	Capital-dependent	Network-dependent	Flexible

The foster and hybrid options offer advantages in geographical reach, infrastructure dependency and operational flexibility. The sanctuary retains advantages in direct control and centralized accommodation. The hybrid model is preferred because it preserves essential central capability while reducing the scale and cost exposure of the current arrangement.

6. FUTURE PROPERTY STRATEGY

6.1 Revised property requirement

JDC Rescue should move away from searching for a large rural property capable of accommodating a substantial dog population. The property search should instead focus on a smaller rescue support facility sized around emergency, temporary and specialist accommodation needs.

- Flat or gently sloping terrain and safe pedestrian access.
- Safe vehicle access, including emergency access.
- Appropriate separation from neighbouring residential properties.
- Planning and zoning feasibility for the intended activities.
- Secure exercise and enrichment areas.
- Adequate drainage, water supply and waste arrangements.
- Suitable isolation and temporary accommodation.
- Reasonable proximity to veterinary services and population centres.
- Accessibility for prospective adopters and volunteers.
- Scope for modest expansion if required.

6.2 Facility functions

- Temporary holding and intake assessment.
- Isolation accommodation where appropriate.
- Emergency and short-term accommodation.
- Support for medical recovery and specialist cases.
- Secure exercise and enrichment areas.
- Cleaning, storage, administration and meeting facilities.

Capacity should be determined by expected emergency and specialist demand. The facility should not be designed around maximum possible kennel numbers.

6.3 Lease versus purchase

Lease and purchase options should be compared on a whole-of-life cost basis. Purchase may provide long-term control but requires capital and creates ongoing ownership exposure. Leasing may preserve capital and provide flexibility while the hybrid model is tested.

Recommendation: Prioritise investigation of a suitable smaller property for lease, with an option to purchase where commercially feasible. Defer substantial land acquisition until the operating model and required capacity have been demonstrated.

7. FOSTER MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

A successful foster or hybrid model requires a formal management framework. Foster accommodation must be treated as part of JDC Rescue's operating system, not as an informal arrangement.

7.1 Foster approval and validation

- Property suitability and containment assessment.
- Household, children and existing-animal compatibility assessment.
- Foster experience, capability and availability assessment.
- Veterinary access and emergency planning.
- Dog-specific matching and placement plan.
- Signed foster agreement and documented induction.

7.2 Foster categories

Category	Intended purpose
Standard foster	Suitable, settled dogs.
Puppy foster	Puppies requiring additional supervision and routine support.
Experienced foster	Adolescent dogs or dogs needing more structured handling.
Specialist foster	Behavioural rehabilitation under an agreed plan.
Medical foster	Dogs recovering from treatment or requiring ongoing care.
Emergency foster	Short-term urgent accommodation.

7.3 Monitoring and accountability

- Standardised foster agreements and clear responsibilities.
- Individual dog placement and care plans.
- Mandatory induction and access to support.
- Initial post-placement contact and scheduled welfare checks.
- Periodic home reviews and reporting.
- Veterinary, medication and incident records.
- Emergency relocation and backup placement protocols.
- Formal approval, suspension and withdrawal processes.

A designated foster coordinator should be accountable for the network. JDC Rescue should retain clear responsibility for placement decisions, welfare oversight, veterinary authorisation and adoption approval.

8. STAFFING AND OPERATING MODEL

The future model should reduce dependence on daily physical labour at one location while strengthening coordination and accountability.

Function	Current sanctuary emphasis	Future hybrid emphasis
Facility management	Major daily operational responsibility	Reduced facility responsibility
Cleaning	Daily centralised workload	Limited facility workload
Dog exercise	Primarily staff-managed	Primarily foster-managed, with hub provision
Behavioural assessment	Centralised	Central hub and specialist foster support
Foster coordination	Secondary activity	Core function
Veterinary coordination	Centralised	Central coordination across placements
Adoption management	Facility-focused	Geographically distributed

Transport	Facility-focused	Greater coordination requirement
Volunteer management	Facility-focused	Network-based

A hybrid model will require a smaller core facility team, but dedicated coordination capacity is essential. Staffing savings should not be assumed until actual hours, coverage requirements and responsibilities have been modelled.

9. FINANCIAL AND INVESTMENT ASSESSMENT

The financial objective is to reduce unnecessary fixed expenditure while preserving sufficient rescue capacity and welfare standards.

Cost category	Sanctuary	Foster	Hybrid
Land and lease	High	Minimal	Moderate
Construction and infrastructure	High	Minimal	Limited
Maintenance and utilities	High	Low central cost	Moderate
Staffing	High facility requirement	Coordination-focused	Combined
Cleaning	High central cost	Distributed	Reduced central cost
Food and veterinary care	Required	Required	Required
Transport	Moderate	Potentially higher	Potentially higher
Foster support and monitoring	Limited	Higher	Higher
Insurance and compliance	Property and operations	Operational and placement-related	Both

9.1 Financial information required

1. Current annual sanctuary operating expenditure and property costs.
2. Staffing, contractor and volunteer support costs, including relief coverage.
3. Average cost per dog per month and average length of stay.
4. Annual intake, adoption, transfer and return volumes.
5. Veterinary expenditure per dog and any specialist-care costs.
6. Expected foster recruitment, coordination, travel and support costs.
7. Estimated cost of a smaller rescue facility and its operating requirements.
8. Capital expenditure, lease terms, insurance and compliance costs for candidate properties.

9.2 Financial scenarios and performance measures

The financial model should include base, downside and severe stress scenarios. It should distinguish between reducing the number of dogs at the sanctuary and actually reducing the organisation's operating costs.

- Cost per successful adoption: total relevant annual expenditure divided by successful adoptions.
- Average monthly cost per dog: relevant operating expenditure divided by average dog numbers.
- Average length of stay: days from intake to adoption or transfer.
- Facility utilisation: occupied accommodation capacity compared with available capacity.
- Foster network cost: recruitment, coordination, travel, supplies and placement support.

10. IMPLEMENTATION AND TRANSITION PLAN

A phased transition is recommended to minimise disruption and protect animal welfare. The indicative timetable below must be aligned with the actual lease expiry date and the number and needs of dogs currently in care.

Phase	Indicative timing	Key deliverables

1. Strategic approval	Immediate	Agree direction, decision boundaries and lease strategy.
2. Operational assessment	Months 1–2	Financial baseline, safety review, capacity and demand assessment.
3. Foster development	Months 2–4	Recruitment, home validation, induction and foster procedures.
4. Pilot transition	Months 4–6	Place suitable dogs in foster homes and evaluate outcomes.
5. Feasibility assessment	Months 6–9	Property, regulatory, staffing and financial assessment.
6. Final decision	Months 9–12	Approve the future property and operating structure.
7. Implementation	Months 12–18	Establish the new operating model and transition remaining dogs.

A short-term extension of the existing lease should be investigated if required to allow an orderly transition and where continued occupation is safe and viable. Existing accommodation should not be surrendered before sufficient replacement arrangements are established.

11. KEY RISKS AND MITIGATION

Risk	Potential impact	Proposed mitigation
Lease expires before replacement capacity is available	Operational disruption and pressure on dog placements	Negotiate a transitional extension and prepare contingency accommodation.
Insufficient foster capacity	Reduced intake capacity or unsuitable placements	Recruit and validate homes before reducing sanctuary capacity.
Foster placement breakdown	Emergency relocation and welfare disruption	Maintain backup foster homes and clear escalation procedures.
Inadequate monitoring	Animal welfare and reputational risk	Implement formal checks, reporting and accountable coordination.
Unsuitable replacement property	Financial loss or inability to operate	Complete due diligence and obtain written regulatory advice before commitment.
Planning or noise restrictions	Delays, complaints or enforcement	Assess zoning, noise and consent requirements at the outset.
Staffing shortages	Insufficient daily care or oversight	Define minimum coverage and relief arrangements.
Costs exceed budget	Financial instability	Obtain cost estimates, use scenario modelling and include contingency.
Adoption rates remain low	Longer stays and reduced capacity	Improve accessibility and monitor adoption conversion data.
Hybrid costs are duplicated	Expected savings do not materialise	Set measurable occupancy and cost-reduction targets for the central facility.

12. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING

Baseline figures should be established before implementation. Management should report quarterly to the Board Committee on the following measures:

KPI	Purpose
Successful adoptions	Measure completed rescue outcomes.
Average length of stay	Assess adoption efficiency and accommodation demand.
Foster placement success	Measure placement suitability and stability.

Foster retention	Assess network resilience.
Foster compliance	Monitor adherence to agreed standards.
Cost per adoption	Measure financial efficiency.
Cost per dog	Compare operating models.
Welfare incidents	Monitor animal welfare and risk.
Staff hours per dog	Measure operational workload.
Adoption enquiry conversion	Evaluate accessibility and adoption process effectiveness.
Emergency accommodation availability	Confirm ongoing rescue capability.

13. FINAL RECOMMENDATION

The preferred future direction for JDC Rescue is a transition towards a foster-led hybrid model.

The existing sanctuary has provided an established operating base. However, the current property's steep terrain and associated health and safety exposure, daily staffing requirements, barking considerations, remote location and potential capital requirements create material limitations that should not automatically be carried into the next phase.

The approaching lease expiry provides an opportunity to restructure the rescue branch rather than simply replace the existing property. JDC Rescue should prioritise development of a professionally managed foster network and retain a smaller physical facility for cases requiring temporary, emergency or specialised accommodation.

This recommendation is conditional on a successful foster pilot, adequate coordination resources, confirmed regulatory feasibility and a financially sustainable operating budget.

13.1 Decisions requested of the Board Committee

9. Approve the strategic direction towards a foster-led hybrid rescue model.
10. Confirm that replication of the current large sanctuary model is not the preferred development strategy.
11. Authorise development of a formal foster recruitment, approval and management programme.
12. Authorise a pilot programme to test the operational and financial viability of foster accommodation.
13. Approve investigation of smaller, accessible properties suitable for a rescue support facility.
14. Defer substantial land purchases and kennel construction until the feasibility assessment is complete.
15. Require investigation of a short-term extension of the existing lease, where appropriate.
16. Require a detailed financial comparison of all three operating models.
17. Require a final implementation proposal supported by operational data, risk assessment and property feasibility findings.

13.2 Strategic conclusion

The decision facing JDC Rescue is not simply whether to retain or replace its current sanctuary. It is whether the organisation should continue investing in a property-dependent rescue structure or develop a more flexible operating model capable of reaching more dogs, foster homes and prospective adopters.

The current sanctuary has served its purpose, but its limitations provide a strong reason to reassess future requirements. The recommended foster-led hybrid model provides a structured pathway towards an operating model in which rescue capability is built around effective care, rehabilitation and successful adoption, rather than the permanent accommodation capacity of a single property.

14. NEW ZEALAND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The following legislation and guidance should inform the final property, operating and compliance assessments:

- Animal Welfare Act 1999.

- MPI Code of Welfare: Dogs.
- Dog Control Act 1996.
- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.
- Resource Management Act 1991 and applicable replacement planning legislation and transitional provisions.
- Relevant district and regional planning rules.
- Applicable building, fire safety, drainage and wastewater requirements.
- Local authority dog-control policies, bylaws and noise provisions.

The exact planning, consent, registration and licensing requirements must be confirmed with the relevant territorial authority for each proposed property and intended activity. Requirements may vary according to the location, scale and nature of the operation. This business case is not a legal opinion.

APPENDIX A – ASSUMPTIONS AND INFORMATION GAPS

This business case is a strategic assessment. It does not include verified cost estimates, confirmed property options, completed legal advice or a final assessment of foster capacity. The following information should be assembled before the Board makes an irreversible investment or final transition decision:

- Current lease expiry date, extension rights, obligations and exit costs.
- Current dog numbers, capacity, intake profile and individual accommodation needs.
- At least 12 months of operating expenditure and staffing information, preferably 24–36 months where available.
- Adoption enquiries, visits, cancellations, conversion rates and average length of stay.
- Current health and safety risk assessment for the property and work activities.
- Foster demand, existing foster capacity, recruitment pipeline and placement outcomes.
- Written preliminary advice from the relevant council on candidate property uses and applicable requirements.
- Indicative property, fit-out, insurance and operating costs for the proposed hub.

APPENDIX B – PROPOSED BOARD RESOLUTION

That the Board Committee:

18. Notes the approaching expiry of the current property lease and the operational limitations associated with the existing sanctuary property.
19. Endorses, in principle, a foster-led hybrid model as the preferred strategic direction for the rescue branch.
20. Authorises management to develop and pilot a formal foster network and to investigate suitable smaller rescue support facilities.
21. Defers any commitment to substantial land acquisition or major kennel construction pending completion of the financial, operational, property and regulatory feasibility work.
22. Requests a further report setting out the pilot results, comparative financial model, risk assessment, property options and recommended implementation plan for final approval.