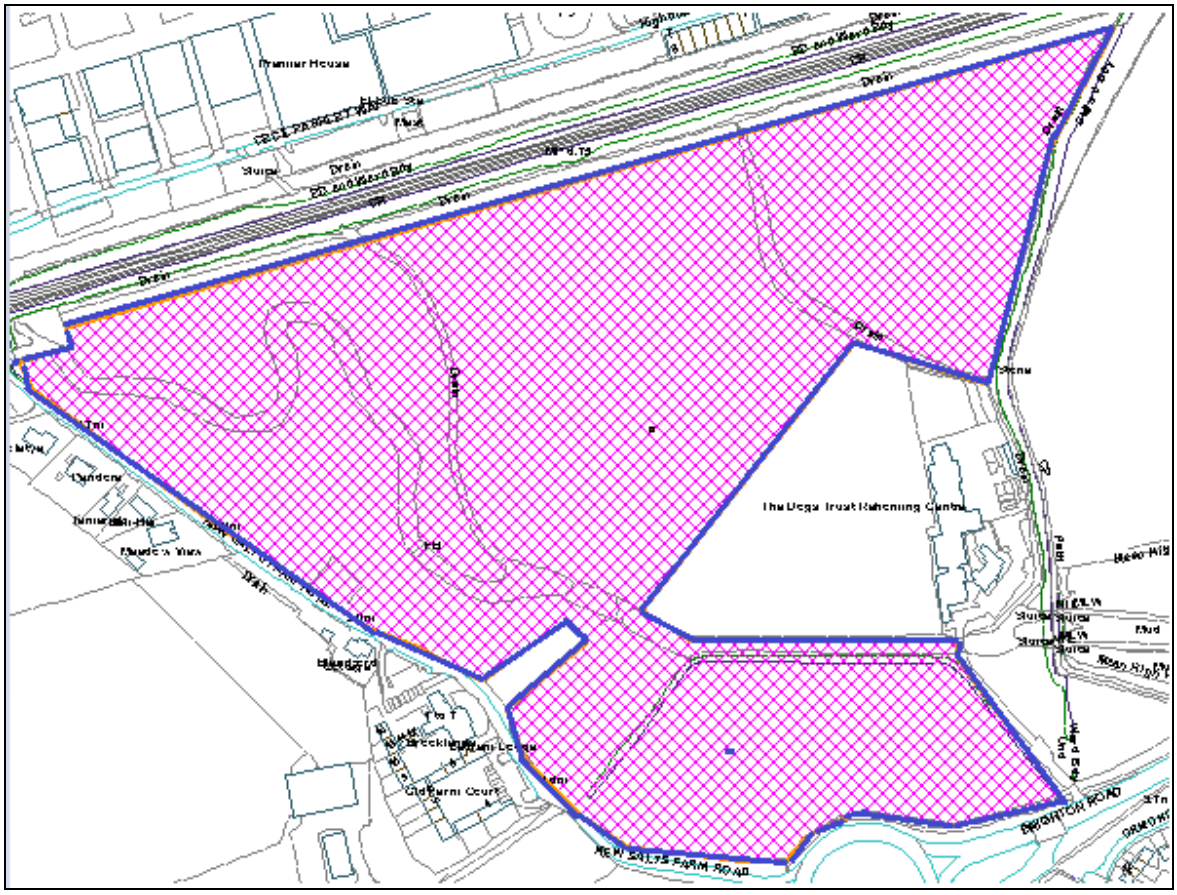
Application Number: AWDM/1006/14 **Recommendation – APPROVE**

Site: **Grazing Land East Of New Salts Farm, New Salts Farm Road, Lancing, West Sussex**

Proposal: **Change of use to allow agricultural land to be used as walking/exercise fields for dogs in connection with adjacent Dogs Trust Rehoming Centre.**

Applicant: Mr Matthew Taylor Ward: Widewater
Case Officer: Peter Barnett



Not to Scale

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Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The application relates to a 13 hectare area of land to the north and east of the Dogs Trust Rehoming Centre. The land is former agricultural land and consists of several

fields separated by watercourses. The land is bordered by New Salts Farm Road to the west, the railway line and Shoreham Airport to the north, Adur Recreation Ground to the east and Brighton Road/Shoreham Beach roundabout to the south.

The Dogs Trust wish to use the land as an amenity field for on-lead exercising and walking of rescue dogs. Planning permission was granted for a smaller 1.2ha paddock immediately to the west of the Dogs Trust complex to be used as such in 2008 (ADC/0330/08).

The applicant has advised that no structures or buildings are required and only a small part of the area will be mown. The majority of the area will remain 'natural' with a series of informal pathways created.

Relevant Planning History

ADC/0330/08 - Change of use of agricultural land for use as walking/exercise field for dogs in connection with adjacent Dogs Trust Rehoming Centre – approved

ADC/0101/10 - Change of use of agricultural grazing land to south (front) to walking/exercise field for dogs for sole private use of adjacent Dogs Trust Rehoming Centre (and enclosure by 1.2m high timber post and rail fence) – approved

Consultations

Adur & Worthing Councils: The Environmental Health Officer has no objection. With regards to concerns about parasitic worms contaminating the soil the applicant has confirmed that the dogs will be wormed and vaccinated and the faeces will be picked up immediately, to minimise the risk of the Toxicara. Therefore the proposed use should pose no greater risk than normal everyday dog walking that occurs every day on agricultural land over the downs.

Lancing Parish Council: No objections

Representations

2 letters of objection received:–

- Proposal will increase traffic to an already busy road
- Increased noise at night from dogs
- Buildings will follow
- Land is needed for agricultural use more than dog care
- Loss of opportunity to look at potential of land for retail use

1 letter of support received:-

- Land will remain open countryside and will not conflict with Local Gap aims

- Low impact use during daylight hours only and will not adversely affect residents of New Salts Farm Road
- Land will be maintained in better condition than it is now

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AC1, AC4
National Planning Policy Framework (CLG 2012)

Relevant Legislation

The Committee should consider the planning application in accordance with:
Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) that provides the application may be granted either unconditionally or subject to relevant conditions, or refused. Regard shall be given to relevant development plan policies, any relevant local finance considerations, and other material considerations; and
Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that requires the decision to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Planning Assessment

Principle

The site lies within the current Strategic Gap (which will become Local Green Gap in the emerging Local Plan) where there is a presumption against development. The site lies within a flood zone the site is not considered to be suitable for built development.

The proposed use as a dog walking area appears to be an acceptable use of this land in principle provided no structures are erected.

Visual amenity

The proposal does not involve any structures being placed on the land and this can be controlled by condition. The existing exercise area does contain a number of pieces of agility equipment for dogs but there is no intention to place these within the extended area. The proposal will not therefore compromise the aims of safeguarding the Gap.

There would be some impact on the character of the area if the whole of the land was to be formally mown and kept manicured. The applicant has stated that this is not the intention and that only informal pathways will be created. It is considered necessary to require a plan of the proposed pathways and landscaping of the area to be provided before the use commences.

There is also the potential for the land to have some ecology interest (the land to the south subject of ADC/0101/10 contained slow worms) and a condition requiring an ecological survey to be carried out prior to any mowing is also recommended.

Residential amenity

There are dwellings to the west along New Salts Farm Road which face the site and abut the western edge of the land subject of the application. While there will be an increase in activity on the land compared with currently, it is not considered that dog walking will result in harm to residential amenity. A plan showing the proposed pathways can be required by condition to ensure that they do not pass too close to the residential properties.

No increase in the number of dogs is proposed and there will not be any increased noise or activity on the site as a result. No additional traffic is expected to be generated by this proposal.

Recommendation

APPROVE

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Standard 3 year time limit
2. The use hereby permitted shall not commence until a plan has been submitted to the LPA showing the proposed pathways to be formed over the land and the extent of area to be mowed.
3. The use hereby permitted shall not commence until an ecological survey of the land has been carried out. Should protected species be discovered, no mowing or disturbance of the land shall take place until details indicating how suitable provision will be made for the protected species and their habitats have been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA.
4. Approved plans